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August 1990

How Do the Latest Game Systems Hold Up Against 16-Bit Computers?

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MICHAEL JACKSON and Sega Join Forces to Unveil *MOONWALKER* for the Genesis—Can You *Beat It!*

MAPS AND TIPS:

NEC's
Neutopia, Part I
Kemco/Seika's
Shadowgate

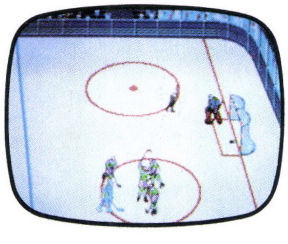
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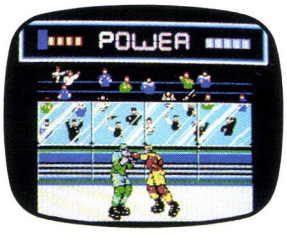


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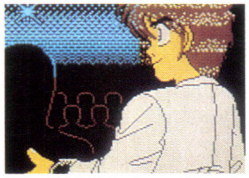


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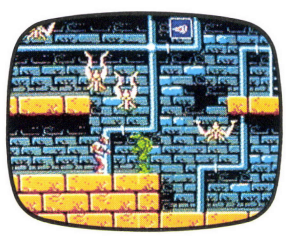
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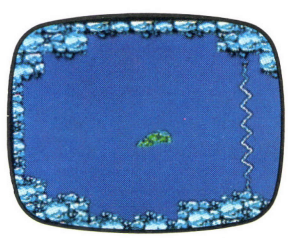
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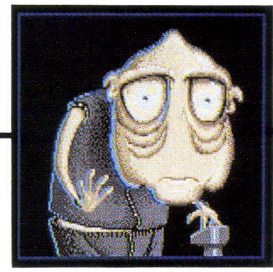
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Cover: Michael Jackson, one of the biggest entertainers of our time, gives a hand to Sega to create an exciting journey into his world of videos in *Moonwalker* for the Genesis. Turn to page 32 for a sneak peak.

Photography: Sam Emerson
Background Art: Alan Hunter

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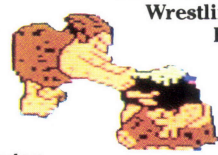
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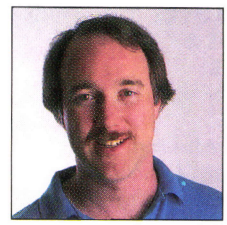
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LETTER From The EDITOR

I must say I'm honored to occupy the same space on the press as Michael Jackson, a virtual legend in the entertainment field. And with *Moonwalker*, the Genesis collaboration between MJ and Sega, he makes his mark on the video-game industry as well. We expect nothing but a great public response—turn to page 32 for a sneak peek at the game.



Certainly our putting Michael Jackson on the cover of the magazine signals some sort of plateau reached. After all, not all magazines in the country can lay claim to "working with Michael Jackson on a cover story," which undoubtedly sells more magazines—a primary consideration in my position.We've hit the big time, huh?

But, truly, what satisfies me more than issues sold—please give my apologies to my boss—is that we reach gamers with news and information in as many ways as we can. Better yet, we're going to introduce some different ways, through the conduits that high technology has provided, for gamers to reach each other and trade information. The key to these upcoming contacts is that they will be instantaneous, so hot stories can be immediately relayed to our readers.

The method that has our attention is our own SIG (special interest group) on DELPHI, an online network that allows computer owners to send electronic mail, post messages and chat in "real-time" conferences, among other things. DELPHI is available worldwide, and the "World of Video Games," as our group will be called, lets the dissemination of video-game information take place at the snap of a finger. (Details on the VG&CE/DELPHI connection can be found on page 131.)

Here's a taste of what the World of Video Games will offer:

- Let's say there is a news flash on a new game or piece of hardware. We could post a notice in the *News Bits* section of our file "library" for anyone to read—*right away*!
- If a group of gamers wants to get together to talk, they can gather in the Conference area, an electronic meeting room. Conferences can also be held on those occasions when we have a special guest, like a game developer or celebrity gamer.
- The Forum is where messages can be left, much like a bulletin board. Discussions can take place on any subject, and often go on for weeks. VG&CE editors will frequent the World of Video Games, so you can also keep in touch with the the magazine's staff with comments.

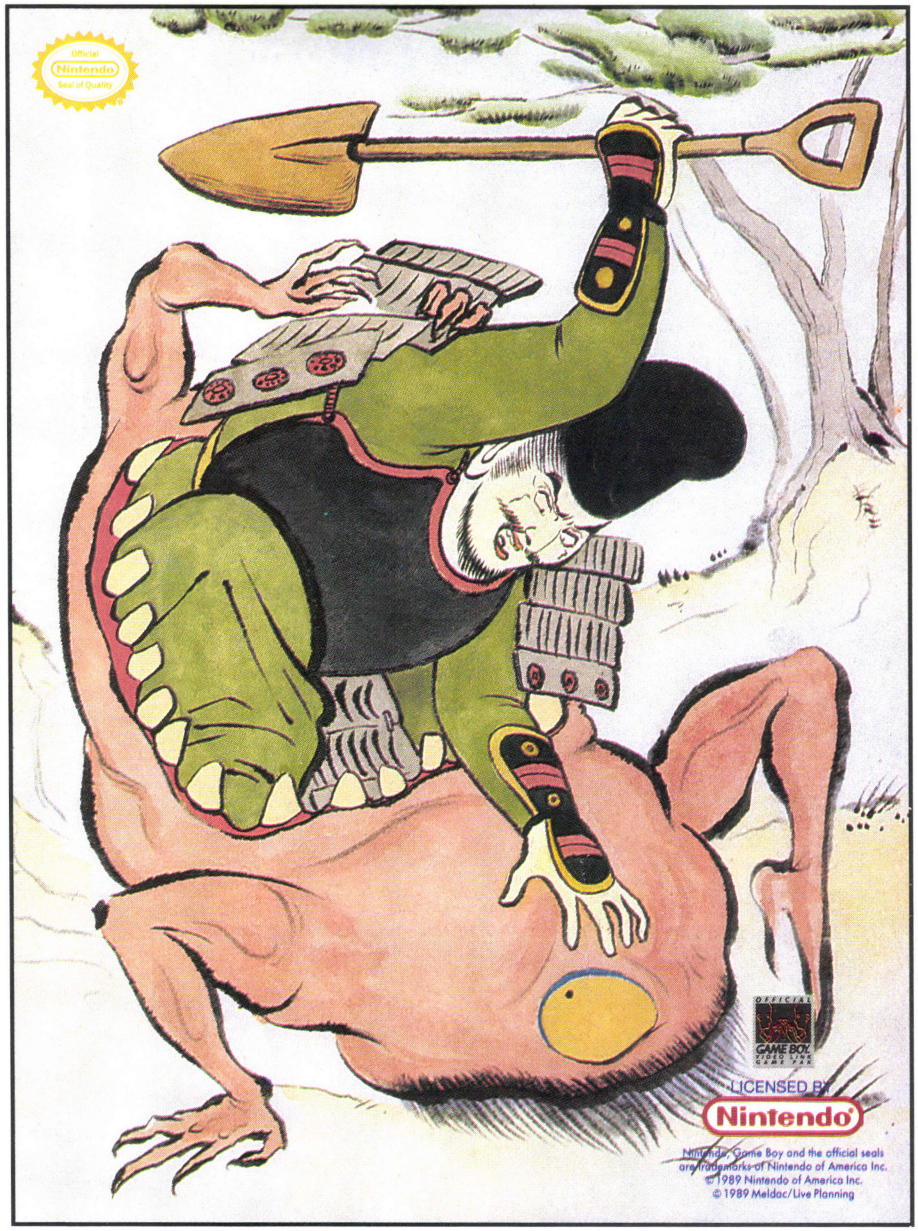
Speaking of comments, we're always interested in any ideas you have. Simply drop us a note at VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, or on DELPHI. Thanks for picking us up!

—Andy Eddy, Executive Editor

HEIANKYO ALIEN™



THE JAPANESE MASTERPIECE



One thousand years ago, an army of malicious aliens invaded the peaceful city of Kyoto, forcing the villagers into an endless battle with the unwelcomed visitors.

This is the classic video game that took Japan by storm ten years ago. This new **HEIANKYO ALIEN** program, made especially for Game Boy, has the added attraction of providing you with two different versions for twice as much excitement and double the fun!

HEIANKYO ALIEN features the Multi Matrix Sound System (MMSS), the latest advancement in audio high technology.

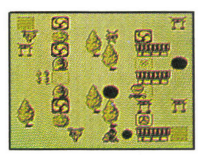
In addition, with the new two player opponent mode, available only on Game Boy software, two players can enjoy the thrills of this exciting game simultaneously!

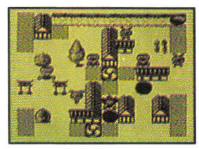
HEIANKYO ALIEN, the Japanese masterpiece, is a game everyone will enjoy.

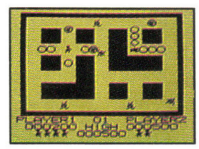


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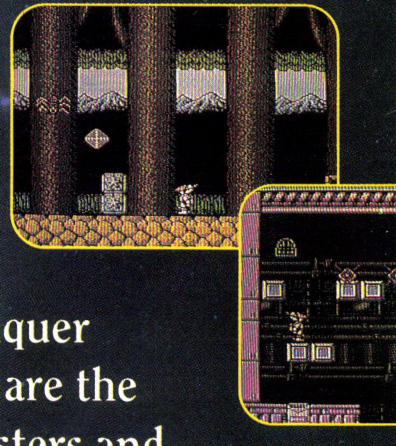
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But be careful. You'll need all your courage and cunning to succeed. Otherwise, the entire human race is doomed to extinction!

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HOT CARTRIDGES

Dear VG&CE:

There are many places up here in Ontario selling special cartridges for the NES that hold up to 52 games. I thought that was pretty ridiculous until I tried one of them. A lot of the games on the cartridge are ancient, but with around 50 of them you're not going to get bored too quickly. They're called MicroGenius and retail for about $100 American. Could you please tell me how this works, how many megabytes we're talking about and the potential for this type of technology, not only on the NES but on other systems such as Genesis?

—Eric Paryas
Kanata, Ontario, Canada

You have to be careful, Eric, because Nintendo is cracking down on multiple-game cartridges. They aren't licensed by Nintendo, and Nintendo recently started taking legal action against companies manufacturing and selling them. This is a form of piracy, and you won't be able to get a replacement, for example, if it suddenly breaks down.

As far as how the cartridge works, we're assuming, since we haven't seen one, that it's simply a group of games combined onto a single cartridge with some sort of menu-selection system.

TWO BITS, FOUR BITS, SIX BITS, A DOLLAR...

Dear VG&CE:

I just read your editorial about the coin-op industry pushing for legislation to have a viable dollar coin. I think that you have missed a very important point—one that really does a grave injustice to operators.

You assumed that because the industry is pushing for the dollar coin that it was to introduce dollar play in the coin-op machines. That is not necessarily so. The way it is now, there is no way to increase the price per play other than in quarter increments. With a dollar coin, operators could set machines at three plays for a dollar which would in effect make it 33 1/3¢ per play. Right now some pinball operators have dollar-bill acceptors on their machines and charge 50¢ for one play, 75¢ for two and $1 for three. Even jukebox operators have raised the price per play on their equipment using dollar-bill acceptors.

Unfortunately, it is not likely to work in videos. A dollar coin would make it possible to raise the price per play. You have to remember that a quarter today has just seven cents in purchasing power. Operators aren't being unreasonable in wanting to see a fair return on their investments; new games can cost up to $10,000.

I commend you for wanting to begin reporting on the coin-op industry to your readers, but I hope I don't see misconceptions about vital topics like the dollar coin.

—Valerie Cognevich
Editor, *Play Meter* Magazine
New Orleans, Louisiana

Thanks for offering your view on the situation, Valerie. If we mislead our readers, we apologize.

On the other hand, what about the new MicroProse game, Strike Eagle F-15, *which is rumored to be priced at 75¢ or $1 per play?*

Also, what if a player only wants to play one game? You certainly couldn't get change back from your dollar coin; and if a play costs 33 1/3¢, how is the arcade industry going to handle a situation like that?

My option for this dilemma is the way many coin-operated machines are dealt with in Japan. In that country, they offer a form of credit card that is preprogrammed with a specific amount of credit on it. You could buy a $10 card and play a machine as long as you'd like. If you only wanted one play, you could simply remove the card and move to another machine. When the card was exhausted, perhaps it could be "recharged" with more credit. (Japanese cards are disposable, but this wouldn't be suitable given the environmental concerns being expressed these days.)

Overall, this card won't be as uncomfortable as having to mint a new coin or forcing consumers to adapt it as well, and the technology would be utilized in other devices like phones or vending machines. Seeing that coin doors would have to be reworked to accept a new coin, it wouldn't be much extra work to switch to these credit cards.

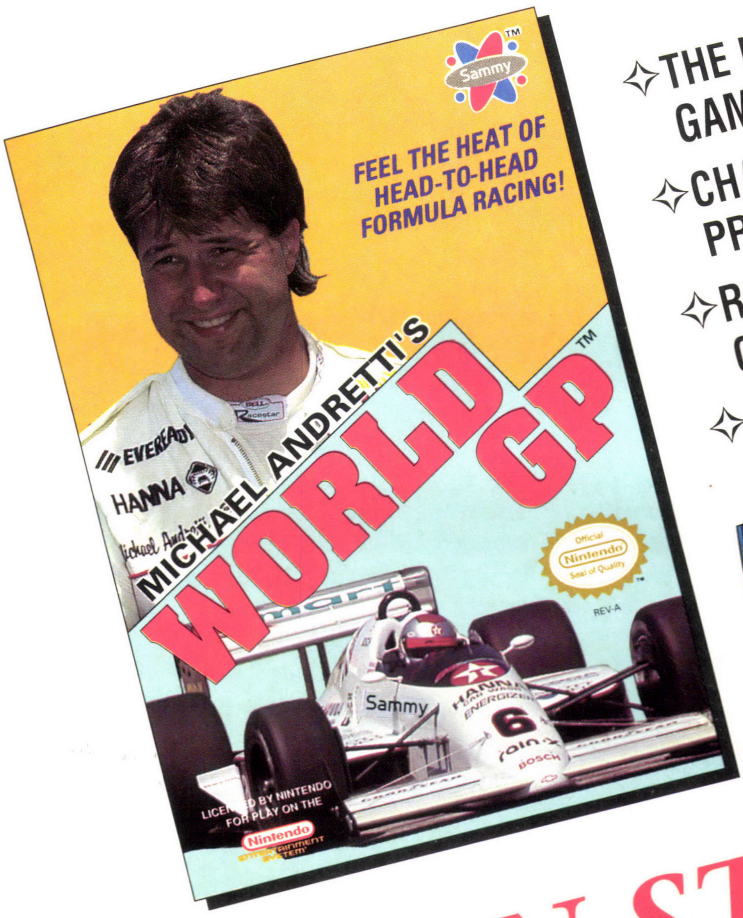
MORE ON EVIL CHARACTERS

Dear VG&CE:

I love your magazine. Keep up the good work. Your magazine is different from all the others because you explain everything completely and clearly.

In your May 1990 issue, there was a letter pertaining to evil religious

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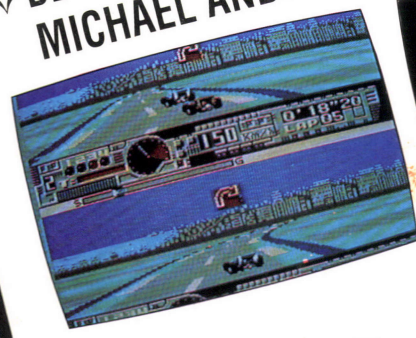


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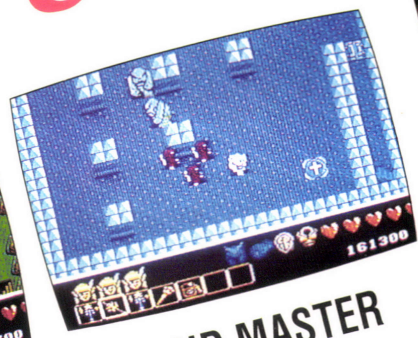
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deities in video games, like Natas in the TurboGrafx-16 game, *Dungeon Explorers*. Natas, when written backward, does spell Satan—in fact, his full title is Natas, King Satan.

I seriously doubt that after someone plays a game with a name like Satan, Loki or Lucifer in it, he or she will go out and worship the devil. Most people probably don't even think about the fact that an enemy has an evil-deity's name.

—Aaron Glickman
Kings Park, New York

I don't think the letter you refer to was saying that people would turn into mindless killers or have their religious preference change because of exposure to a questionable name in a video game. The point that letter writer made had to do with whether it was necessary *to use those names in a game, and risk offending some gamers who play it.*

In the early '80s, there were some "novelty" games that were squarely aimed at an adult audience. In this instance, it doesn't seem necessary to get attention this way.

ADVERTISING REDUX

Dear VG&CE:

I read with great interest your *Yea & Nay* column on advertisements creeping into video-game cartridges. It's a trend that started with Coke™ and Pepsi™ ads appearing on video cassettes, beginning with Paramount's 1987 video release of *Top Gun*. The ad reflected the theme of the film, entertained viewers and, most notably, reduced the price of the video. The end result was millions of videos sold. A number of videos with ads have followed since then, and in almost every case it's resulted in a lower video price or a mail-in rebate.

Now ads are showing up in movie theatres, and though some of the advertisements claim the ads keep the ticket prices down, they have continued to go up. The moviegoer gets nothing in return for viewing these ads on the big screen.

So, do ads for products such as Pepsi belong in video games? Yes, but only if the company releasing the game reduces the price of the game, passing the savings on to the consumer as a result of the licensing fees. (This is the same reason why, in my opinion, software published by Nintendo should be less than titles published by third-party companies.)

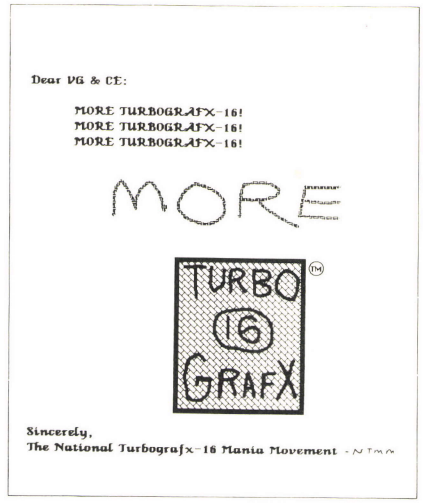
The ads will appear, but if $5 is knocked off the price, I doubt that most consumers will mind.

—Dennis Chimelis, Jr.
Bellport, New York

You won't get any argument from us on that, Dennis. We're all for saving money anywhere we can, and if a company advertises in a game, why shouldn't we benefit? What do you say, game manufacturers?

IT HAD TO HAPPEN...

Dear VG&CE:



AND WHILE WE'RE AT IT...

Dear VG&CE:

I'm the president of the GBA, Game Boys Anonymous. Let me get to the point: Why don't you have more Game Boy in your books? You have plenty of advertisements, but you don't give enough information on the games.

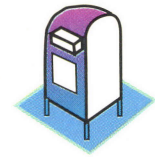
More Game Boy!
More Game Boy!
More Game Boy!

—Leon Jones
Detroit, Michigan

Thanks for the letters, guys. Being that we cover the entire *video-game scene, it sometimes spreads us thin on one particular brand. Similarly, having a four-month lead time limits our ability to cover certain products that are rushed to market. As more TG-16 and Game Boy games come to market, you'll see more coverage of them in* VG&CE, *but we only want to write about them when they're ready to be released, rather than just Japanese products that* may *show up in America.*

If you turn to page 54, you'll find the second installment of our new portable column, Gaming on the Go. *Maurice covers lots of the new Game Boy games and will continue to in his space.*

By the way, did you get a look at our Game Boy Buyer's Guide *in the last issue?*



EGGING US ON

Dear VG&CE:

I can't say enough about your magazine. It's great! It's fantastic!

I have one suggestion: Make *Easter Egg Hunt* longer. While I love it, three to five tips a month is not a lot.

Thanks again for a totally outrageous magazine!

—Bobby Montgomery
Bonney Lake, Washington

Thanks so much for the kind words, Bobby. In response to your request, you'll notice that we've upped the coverage in our Easter Egg Hunt *column. We've been getting an incredible number of letters with the same appeal. Now that expert gamer Donn Nauert,* VG&CE*'s Assistant Editor (who we spoke about in the April 1990* Letter From the Editor*) is on the case, you'll be seeing more and better tips.*

Between the new Tip Sheet and *our* Easter Egg Hunt *columns, we'll be giving more advice and tricks for our readers to help them through their games. Those columns are in addition to the two detailed strategy guides we provide each month. We hope you like the difference and will continue to turn to* VG&CE *for game info!*

GENESIS DOES

WHAT NIN

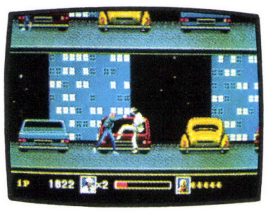
INTRODUCING MICHAE



1. In the graveyard, Michael has to defeat the ghouls whose mere touch is poisonous.



2. With the Dance Attack, Michael outdances the tough hoods on the street.



3. Use Michael's high kicking power to send his enemies flying into the air.

It's here. The hit music video becomes the first ever hit music video game. It was designed by Michael Jackson himself. His moves match his video so closely, it's uncanny. The animation is unmatched. The stereo sound uses Michael's actual voice. And the music is unlike anything you've ever heard before in a video game. It's only possible with the 16-bit power of Genesis.

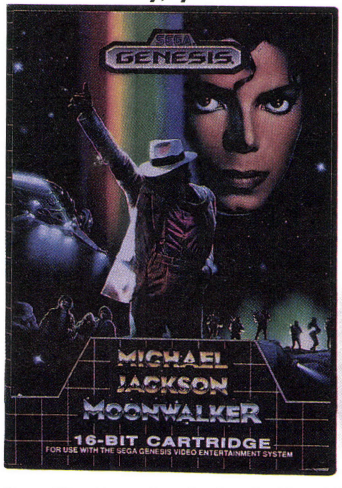
The totally evil Mr. Big is kidnapping the children of the world. It's up to you to rescue them. In 16 different rounds.

Take on Mr. Big's deadly henchman in Club 30 using your kicks, jump spins, punches and hat attacks. Battle wild dogs and young punks in the high-rise garage. Fend off the zombies in the cemetery. And dodge laser beams in Mr. Big's High Tech Hideout. This game's got it all.

All of this to the stereo sounds of "Smooth Criminal," "Beat It," "Thriller," "Bad" and "Billie Jean."

Finally, you transform into a giant flying robot and use your own laser weapons and heat-seeking missiles.

And from the moment you hit the start button, you know one thing for sure. You can't do this on Nintendo®.





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TENDON'T.

. JACKSON'S MOONWALKER.™



4. Michael searches through caves and caverns to find the carefully hidden kidnapped children.



5. Use the transporter beam in Mr. Big's hideout to move from floor to floor. Watch out for the automatic laser guns.



6. All of Michael's famous dance moves are in the game, including Moonwalking and the Lean.

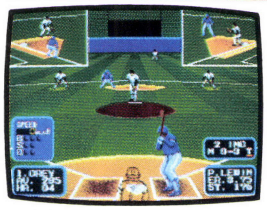


7. To defeat Mr. Big's most challenging henchmen, Michael transforms before your eyes into an all powerful Robot fighting machine.

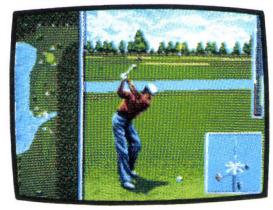


GENESIS DOES IT ALL.

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Tommy Lasorda Baseball™


World Championship Soccer™


Arnold Palmer Tournament Golf™


Pat Riley's Basketball™



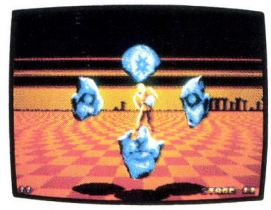
James "Buster" Douglas Knockout Boxing™

ARCADE GAMES:

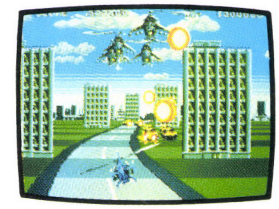


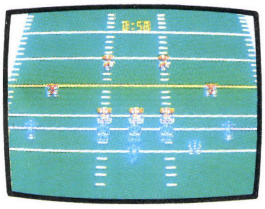
Joe Montana Football™


Golden Axe™

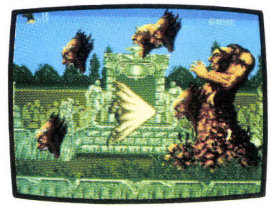

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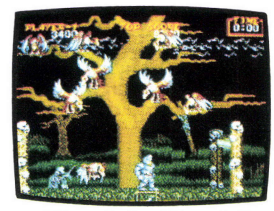

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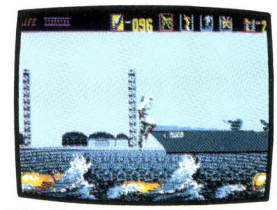

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Cyberball™

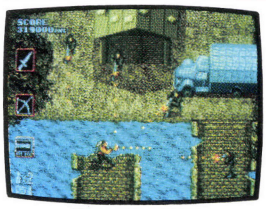

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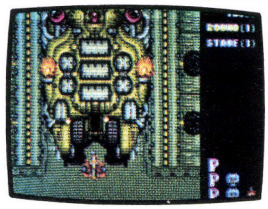

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The Revenge of Shinobi™

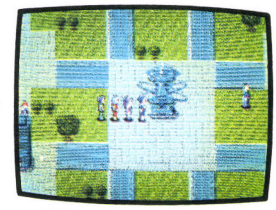
ADVENTURE:


Rambo III®


Truxton™

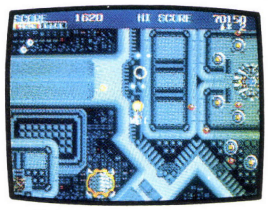

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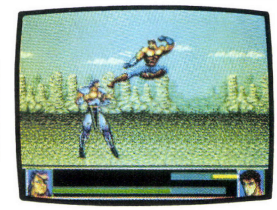
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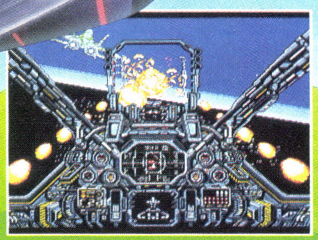
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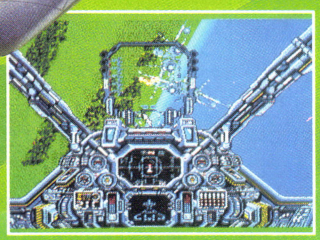
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SEGA GENESIS

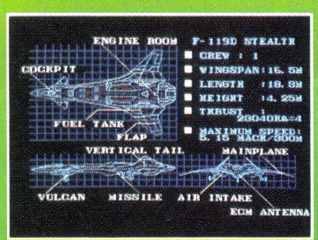
AIR DIVER



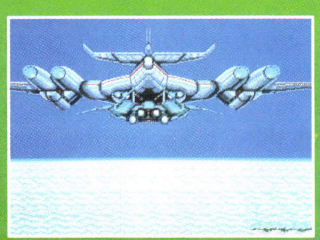
Take on the North Pacific region at night; enemies have no chance once they're in your sights!



Execute barrel rolls while blasting vulcan guns at the enemy.



Specifications on the F-119/Stealth, the world's most advanced fighter.



After defeating a level, dock inside the Super Transport and be repaired, refueled and restocked with weapons.

Top Secret Briefing:

You have been selected for a mission of the utmost secrecy. The details of the mission have been purposely withheld until the last possible moment to prevent any leaks to the enemy. Led by an evil, fanatical leader, an unknown terrorist organization has acquired a military force so powerful, that so far, no conventional force has been able to withstand.
Your mission is to find and eliminate the enemy terrorists.
The success of your mission depends on penetrating enemy lines without detection. Your F-119 Stealth fighter may be invisible to radar, but your experience as a Top Gun pilot is the only difference between a world as we know it, or a world of dark oppression.

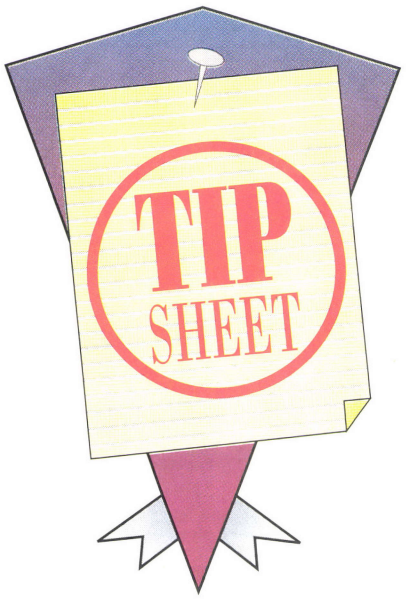
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In the months since the release of *Super Mario Bros. 3*, we have received a lot of letters concerning the magic whistles, areas where you can max out your men at 99 and other special secrets that can be found in the game. Well, we decided to answer all the letters at once in *Tip Sheet*. If you know something about the game that we don't mention, please write and tell us about it.



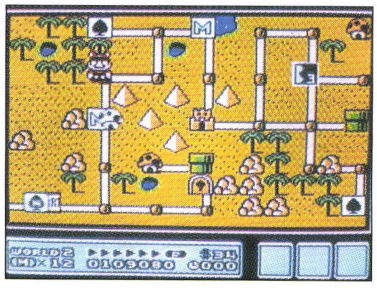
by Donn Nauert

Magic Whistles

In World 1-3, there is a white block located near the end of the round. Jump on the block and hold down on the controller. After a few seconds, you will fall through the block and appear behind the scenery. Move to the right as if you were going to the end of the round, except this time you will appear in a secret room behind the black curtain.

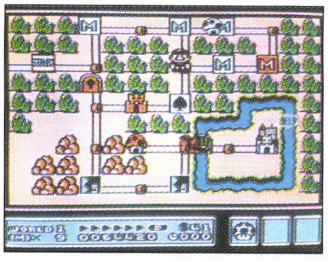
In the first mini-castle, there is an opening in the roof located near the end (above the box containing the leaf). You must fly through the opening and hold to the right. Once the screen stops scrolling, push up and you will obtain the second whistle. First get rid of Dry Bones by standing one step to the right of the question-mark block, then, when Dry Bones gets close, jump straight up, land on him, then power-run (with the "B" button) to the right, then power-run back to the left. Dry Bones should disappear, and you will have enough power on the meter to fly straight up.

Even the best player has trouble with a game now and again, but where can you turn for help? VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT has designed *Tip Sheet* to give you, the reader, answers to questions such as "How do I defeat the end boss on this level?" or "I've looked everywhere, but I can't find the blue vase." So if you're having a problem on a game, write to us, and our group of experts will do everything they can to solve it. Send your letters to
VG&CE,
9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300
Beverly Hills, CA 90210
Attn: *Tip Sheet*



You'll get special items from the white mushrooms in World 1 (right) and World 2 (above).

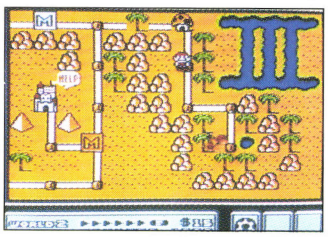
The third and final whistle is located in World 2. After completing Section 2-4, look for the Hammer Bros. One of them will give you a hammer once you defeat him. Use the hammer to break the rock found to the right of 2-4, which will then open into a new area where you can get an extra item from the Toad's house and the whistle from the Fire Bros.

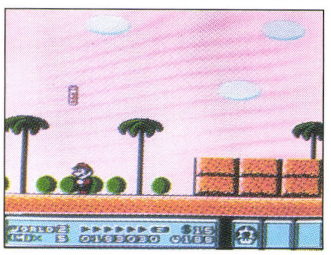


99 Reserve Men

Throughout *Super Mario Bros. 3*, there are numerous sites to gain 99 extra men. Most of them require you to collect as many coins as possible before your time runs out, then repeat the round. Or, if the round has more than one 1-Up, collect them, then purposely die to repeat the round.

Whenever four or more enemies come out at the same time, you have the chance to gain 99 men. A good example is in World 1-2, where the Goombas come out of the pipe. If you time it correctly, you can jump on top of them without hitting the ground and in this way gain extra men. But jumping on the characters like that can be pretty difficult, so I thought I'd show you three locations where you can get extra men with little or no effort.





Take on the Fire Bros. in World 2's hidden area to get the third whistle.

The first location appears in World 3-4. To make this trick work, you must travel far enough to the right until Lekeetu (the guy in the cloud that throws green balls) comes on the screen. Once you have his attention, move back to the left until you get to the Koopa. Jump on the Koopa Troopa and then run with the shell to the right. When you reach the pipe (see the accompanying picture), quickly jump on the

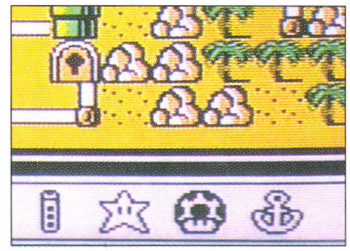
ledge and release the shell. It should now be bouncing back and forth between two wood blocks, with Lekeetu floating above. Every time Lekeetu throws a green ball, it will hit the pipe and land in the path of the shell. By staying on the ledge, you will build the point values up until they become 1-Ups.

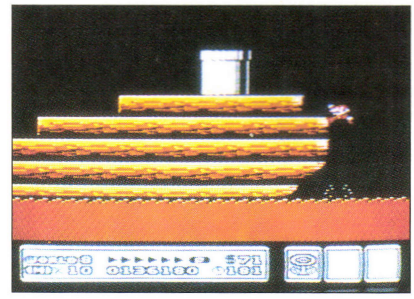
In World 3-9 you will be able to do a similar trick. This time simply get the Koopa Troopa at the beginning and power-run until you reach two cannons (as shown). Once you release the shell, jump to the ledge above and try to center yourself so that both cannons are in view, then watch as your extra-man total soars.

The final location is located in the first mini-fortress of World 7. As you enter the fortress, you'll notice an overhang. If you're a big Mario, you should go to the fourth set of blocks from the left and break the blocks until you find the switch block (see the accompanying picture). Hit the switch block and get ready for coin city. When collecting the coins, start at the left then move along the bottom to the right.

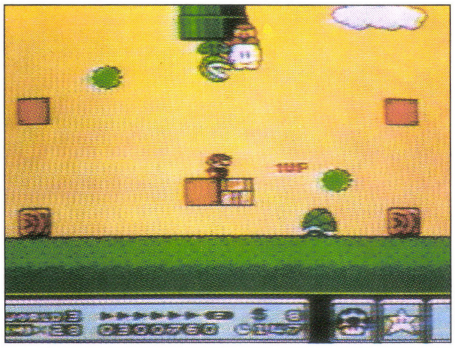
Just about when the coins turn back to blocks you will reach a door. By exiting this door, you will appear in another room, which will lead you to the boss. By reentering this same door, everything will reset. You will be able to repeat this trick until your time runs out.

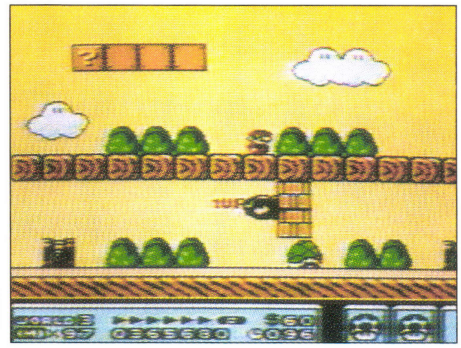
If you aren't a Big Mario, don't worry—there is a mushroom in this world. The nice thing about this particular trick is that it not only increases your men, but it increases your score as well. And for every 75,000 points you obtain in this World, you'll receive an N-mark spade panel that allows you to get all the items you want.

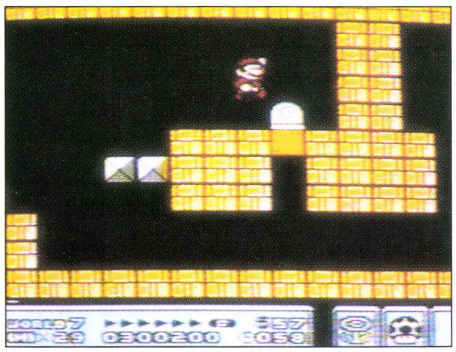




Top: The anchor will keep the ships from floating away. Bottom: In World 8, you can swim under the boats safely.







Here are three of the many locations in Super Mario Bros. 3 where 99 men can be easily obtained.

Top left: In World 3-4, the shell takes out Lekeetu's shots, building up 1-Ups.

Top right: Use the shell in World 3-9 to knock out the bullets as they're fired.

Left: Hit the switch block to acquire 1-Ups by coins in the first mini-fortress of World 7.

Anchor

We have also received a lot of mail concerning the anchor. The anchor is used to stop the airships of Bowser's kids from flying throughout the Mushroom World. The secret to obtaining this special item is to obtain enough coins in certain worlds for the white mushroom to appear. Here is a listing of where to find the mysterious white mushroom and what you get for it:

World	Must Obtain	Item
1-4	44 coins	P-Wing
2-2	30 coins	Anchor
3-8	44 coins	P-Wing
4-2	22 coins	Anchor
5-5	28 coins	P-Wing
6-7	78 coins	Anchor
7-2	47 coins	P-Wing

N-mark Spade Panels

Here is a chart for all eight N-mark spade panels:

Board 1:

F	S	U	F	U	M
10	M	F	S	M	10
S	20	20	M	F	S

Board 5:

F	20	M	S	U	F
U	F	10	M	20	S
M	10	S	M	F	S

Board 2:

M	F	20	M	10	S
F	U	M	10	U	20
S	F	S	M	F	S

Board 6:

F	10	U	F	U	M
S	M	20	S	M	10
S	F	20	M	F	S

Board 3:

U	M	10	M	F	S
M	10	S	20	20	F
S	U	F	M	F	S

Board 7:

F	S	U	F	20	M
10	M	20	U	M	10
S	F	S	M	F	S

Board 4:

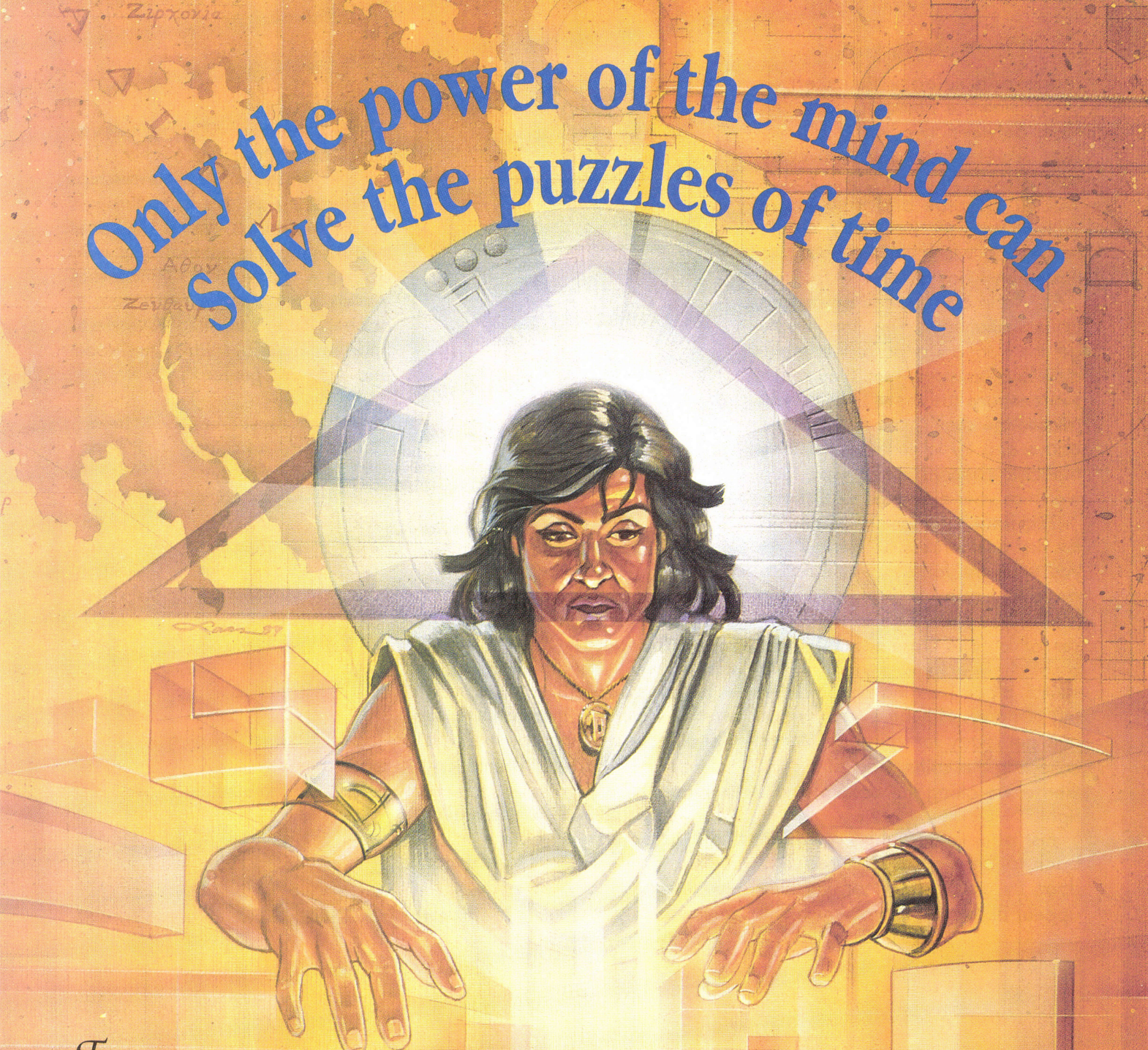
M	F	U	F	S	S
20	S	M	10	U	F
20	M	10	M	F	S

Board 8:

M	F	20	F	10	S
20	U	M	10	U	F
S	M	S	M	F	S

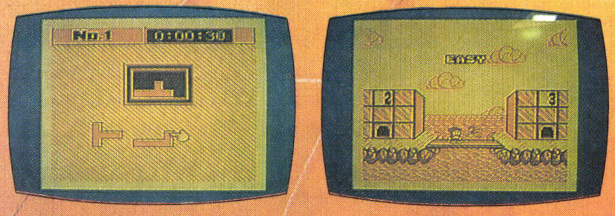
Key: F—flower, S—star, M—mushroom, 10—ten coins, 20—twenty coins, U—extra man.

Only the power of the mind can Solve the puzzles of time



The ancient land of Daedalus is governed by symmetry and time. It is a land, where your progress will be severely tested by the challenge of myriad shapes and blocks. It will take the art of Daedalus and the power of your mind to solve the confounding riddles of the blocks. To master Daedalian Opus™ is to achieve the art of victory.

Daedalian Opus™ (dĭ-dā´lē·ən ō´pəs)



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PRESENTS

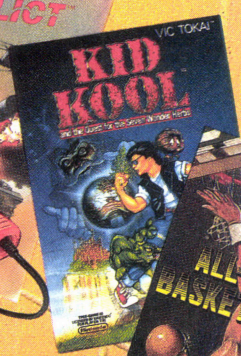
The $100,000 Daedalian Opus™

SWEEPSTAKES & TOURNAMENT !!

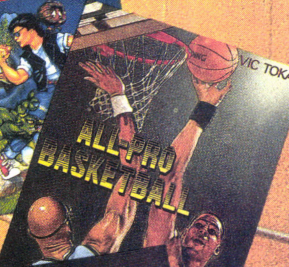
- **400 prizes awarded each month!**
- **Five winners fly to Los Angeles!**
- **Winners compete in "Daedalian Opus™" Tournament!**





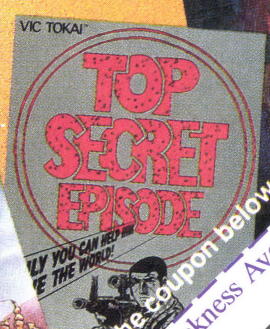












SWEEPSTAKES

Each month, beginning July 15th, 1990, a drawing will determine 400 winners who will receive prizes including a Daedalian Opus™ jacket. The last drawing for the final 400 winners will occur on November 15th, 1990.

After the November winners have been drawn, all entries received from July through November will go into a new drawing for the Daedalian Opus™ tournament.

TOURNAMENT

Five entries will be drawn for the tournament. Each of these five winners will be awarded $1000 cash, a trip for two to Los Angeles (hotel accommodations and meals are included), two tickets to Disneyland, a Light Boy accessory for use with Game Boy™, and a chance to compete against each other in the Daedalian Opus™ tournament at a CAPTRON World of Nintendo center.



TOURNAMENT PRIZES

The champion of the Daedalian Opus™ Tournament will win the following prizes:

- A 25 inch color television set
- A Nintendo Action Set®
- A Mountain bicycle
- The entire Vic Tokai line of NES® game paks

Hurry! Fill in the entry form for this month's sweepstakes and the Daedalian Opus Tournament!

Mail in the coupon below.

VIC TOKAI Sweepstakes 22904 Lockness Ave., Torrance, CA 90501

Name (Please Print)

Street

City

State

Zip

Phone

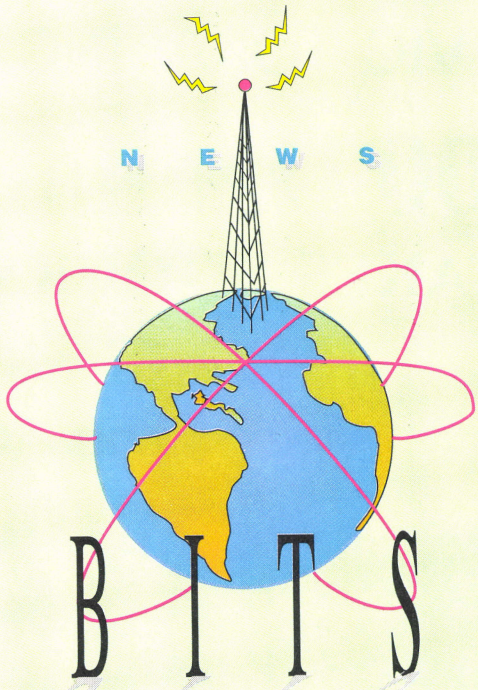
Age

Shirt Size
S. M. L
XL

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COMPILED BY
JOYCE WORLEY



SPA Presents Software Awards

The Software Publishers Association, the leading trade association for makers of home-computer software, presented its annual awards at a gala black-tie dinner in San Diego, California. Eleven Excellence in Software Awards were given to entertainment products.

SimCity, the City Simulator (Maxis) was the big winner of the evening, winning in three categories: Best Simulation, Best Entertainment and Best Curricular Program. Other entertainment products that won awards were:

Best Fantasy Role Playing/Adventure Program: *Space Quest III: The Pirates of Pestulon* (Sierra)

Best Sports Program: *HardBall II* (Accolade)

Best Strategy Program: *Populous* (Electronic Arts)

Best Action/Arcade Program: *Welltris* (Spectrum Holobyte)

Best Early Education Program: *The Playroom* (Brøderbund)

Best Elementary Education Program: *Math Shop, Jr.* (Scholastic)

Best Secondary Education Program: *Math Blaster Mystery* (Davidson)

Best Home Learning Program: *Where in Time Is Carmen Sandiego?* (Brøderbund)

In addition, two Critic's Choice Awards (voted on by the press) were given to entertainment programs:

Best Consumer Program: *SimCity, the City Simulator* (Maxis)

Best Education Program: *The Children's Writing & Publishing Center* (The Learning Company)

Changing Hardware Stuns Computer Game Sales

Sales of home computer games dropped 11.6% in 1989 to finish at $288.4 million, according to the SPA. Figures were based on reports from member companies.

The breakdown by computer brand makes it obvious that 1989 totals represent a lull caused by the steep decline in sales of games for older machines. Entertainment for IBM PC computers rose nearly 14% to $167 million for the year, but sales of Apple II games skidded 48% and C-64 games dropped over 36%.

The fourth quarter was worse than the year as a whole for both companies. Apple II game sales crashed during the holiday season. The three-month total, $7.5 million, is a whopping 58.6% below the same period of 1988. C-64 games declined 55.1% during the same 90-day interval.

Limited distribution insures that Apple II and Commodore 64 games will not reverse the sales slide. The picture is much brighter for both IBM PC and Amiga, however, and most analysts project an increase of 15%-20% in 1990.



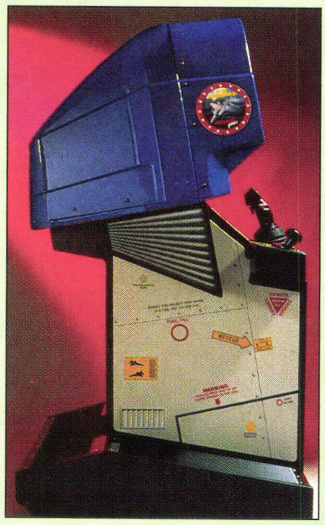
Strike Eagle Lands in Arcade

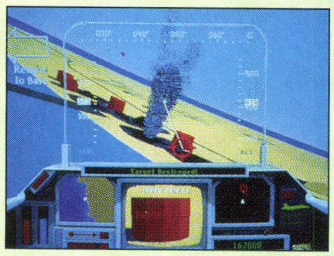
The MicroProse top-selling computer game is now a coin-snatcher, turning joystick jockeys into jet fighter pilots.

The arcade version of *F-15 Strike Eagle* features 3-D graphics created by 60,000 polygons regenerated at a rate of 30 frames per second. According to Chuck Grempler, MicroProse's director of engineering, this provides graphics that are considerably advanced over most arcade games, which normally use 12,000 polygons per second.

MicroProse did extensive advance testing to make the flight simulation game playable for arcade goers who have never used computers. The lower levels were made easier in the coin-snatcher version, while upper-skill levels require pilots with the right stuff.

The computer version of *F-15 Strike Eagle* has sold over 1,000,000 copies worldwide.

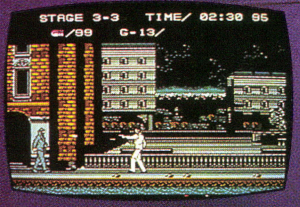




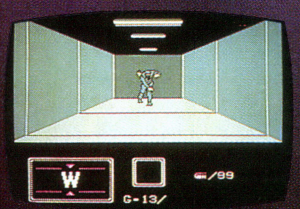
Magnavox Wins Damages From Mediagenic

Magnavox was awarded damages totaling approximately $6 million in a 1982 patent-infringement suit against Mediagenic (formerly Activision). The decision was rendered by

An encore performance!







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the U.S. District Court, Northern California, concerning eleven Activision video-game cartridges. The total amount is composed of royalties, damages, interest and attorney fees.

The suit stemmed from the patent held by the Magnavox Company for the pioneering work done by Ralph Baer, "the father of video games." Working through the Lawrence Saunders Institute under contract from Magnavox to find alternate entertainment uses for television sets, he created the first home video game. The Magnavox Company subsequently obtained a patent for the paddle-and-ball techniques Baer invented.

Mediagenic attorneys are exploring the possibilities of appeal, and the two companies are negotiating terms of settlement.

Activision Unveils Games for NES, Game Boy, Genesis

Activision's new entertainment line includes titles for three video-game systems, including Nintendo Entertainment System, Nintendo's Game Boy and the Sega Genesis.

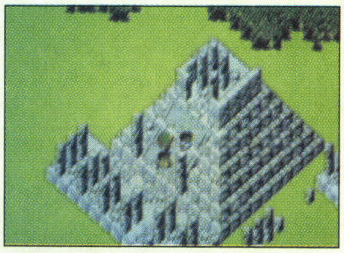
Ghostbusters II for the NES echoes the theme of the movie. Players have to slime or trap ghosts and remove all evil from New York City. Also for the NES, *Thunderbirds* features high-tech aircraft in top-down perspective air combat.

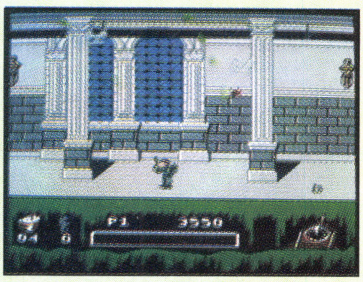


Infocom's first title for the NES is *Tombs and Treasure,* an ambitious effort that is said to provide over 40 hours of play as gamers meet monsters in the Mayan ruins at Chichén Itzá.

Activision will support the Game Boy with three titles, including *Heavyweight Championship Boxing,* in which players face a variety of opponents until they are ready for a title bout; *Malibu Beach Volleyball,* a two-on-two contest in the sand; and *Ghostbusters II.*

Activision's offering for the Genesis is *Mondu's Fight Palace.* This game features hand-to-hand combat against ten aliens, each with their own special skill or weapon.





Acclaim Adds SuperPlay Handheld Games

Acclaim is adding seven new games to their line of SuperPlay handheld games, bringing the total to eleven palm-sized arcades. The new titles are *NARC, BigFoot, IronSword, Arch Rivals, Ring King, Combat Zone* and *Total Recall.*

NARC is a miniature of the arcade game from Williams. *BigFoot* is a big truck event. *IronSword: Wizards & Warriors II* continues the adventures of Knight Kuros through a medieval fantasy. *Arch Rivals* is a basketball game. *Combat Zone* provides military action. *Ring King* is a boxing contest. And, finally, *Total Recall* is based on the Arnold Schwarzenegger science-fiction movie.

The new Acclaim SuperPlay games join the four original handhelds in the line: *WWF WrestleMania Challenge, Wizards & Warriors, Knight Rider* and *1943: The Battle of Midway.* They each retail for $19.95.

Electronic Arts Wins "Best Software Publisher" Awards

Electronic Arts has won the 1990 "Best Software Publisher" award from two leading industry groups. The California-based software publisher won the top prizes at both the United States 1990 Computer Game Developers' Conference and the United Kingdom's first annual European Computer Leisure Awards ceremony.

Electronic Arts shined victoriously in six categories at the United Kingdom ceremony, whose judges, all magazine publishers, came from France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the U.K. DeluxePaint III won "Best Graphics" and "Best Product for the Amiga" awards, and *Populous* won the "Best Game of the Year," "Most Original Game" and "Best Strategy Game" awards.



Tengen Gets Award

Tengen has won the "Manufacturer of the Year" award presented by American Video Associations. The company's national sales representative, Mike Taylor, accepted the prestigious award on behalf of Tengen.

"We are honored to be named 'Manufacturer of the Year' by members of the AVA," says Ted Hoff, senior vice-president of Tengen. "As an independent software developer and manufacturer in the video-game industry, Tengen appreciates the significance of an award from this

A Game So True-to-Life, You Don't Just Play It. You Live It!

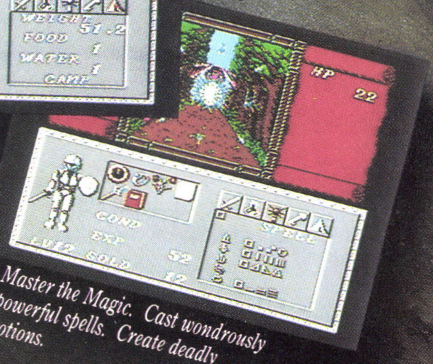
DUNGEON MAGIC™

Finally, a fantasy role-playing adventure that makes you a part of the action.

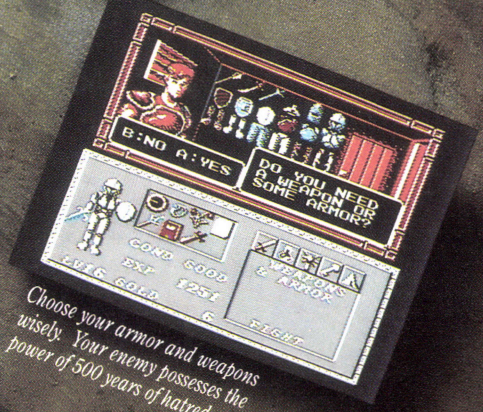




Beware of the serpant's bite. It is deadly. And you are vulnerable.



Master the Magic. Cast wondrously powerful spells. Create deadly potions.



Choose your armor and weapons wisely. Your enemy possesses the power of 500 years of hatred and evil.

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distinguished group...." The AVA is an organization of independently owned video stores, and the awards were voted on by the 2,800 members nationwide.

Commodore Pulls Plug on Entertainment Software

Commodore recently sent letters to all entertainment-software houses currently developing programs for the Amiga game machine (see *News Bits*, VG&CE, June 1989), effectively halting all work. The company said they were stopping development of all entertainment products to concentrate their efforts only on educational software. However, some educational development firms received the same letter, giving rise to questions about the future of the new Amiga machine.

The Amiga game machine is said to be essentially the same CPU as the Amiga 500 computer, sold without keyboard or disk drive, but with a built-in CD player. The company has not yet announced a release date for the machine.

FBI Nabs Game Pirate

A recent FBI operation led to the capture and conviction of Frank J. Karchefski of Wayne, Michigan, on mail-fraud charges for selling copies of computer software.

Karchefski was sentenced to 11 months in prison for operating a mail-order business, Hanoverfist Enterprises. The company made and sold copies of software and documentation. The FBI seized over 2,500 pirated disks, along with computers and copyrighted instruction manuals valued at over $250,000. Most of the disks were entertainment software.

The Software Publishers Association worked closely with the FBI throughout the investigation. Ken Wasch, SPA executive director, said, "It is easy to see that many small software publishers were hurt by this illegal operation...."

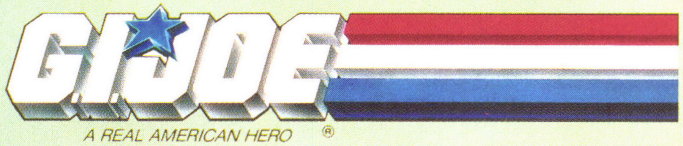
R. Duff Thompson, chairman of the SPA copyright protection fund, commented on the case, "We are encouraged by the recent FBI action in working to stop software piracy. We look forward to continued cooperation with the FBI and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, who are also investigating unauthorized software duplication."

Individuals wishing to report copyright violations can contact the anti-piracy hotline at (800) 388-PIR8.

GI Joe, The Simpsons Coming to NES

Taxan has entered into a license agreement with Hasbro, Inc., to use GI Joe in a forthcoming video game for the Nintendo Entertainment System. Taxan will also develop a separate *GI Joe* cartridge for the Game Boy, with a slightly different storyline.

The *GI Joe* game uses three megabits and an MMC 3 configuration (which is currently only used in *Super Mario 3*). It has multiple quests, difficulty levels and alternate endings. It will also have a password capability.



Hide Irie, director of Taxan's consumer division, explained the company's reasons for bidding on the license: "Taxan viewed it as an exciting license because GI Joe, with its action and adventure features, translated well into the video-game-software arena. We felt extremely privileged when we received the license from Hasbro. We knew there was so much potential to develop a unique and exciting game." GI Joe first made his debut in 1964.

Acclaim has obtained exclusive rights to create NES, Game Boy and SuperPlay handheld games based on television's favorite family, *The Simpsons*. Acclaim will release a *Simpsons* SuperPlay handheld this autumn, and the video games will follow before Christmas.

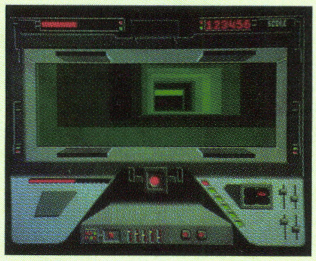
Robert Holmes, president of Acclaim, commented on his company's decision to license the cartoon stars: "Undoubtedly, *The Simpsons* is the hottest license on the market...its characters are perfectly suited to star on the... [Nintendo game systems]."

California Dreams Joins EA Affiliate-Label Program

Logical Design Works, the publisher of California Dreams software, has entered into a distribution agreement with Electronic Arts, which gives EA exclusive retail distribution rights in Canada, Australia and the U.S.

Dick Vohlers, vice-president of operations for California Dreams, explained why his company made the deal: "We feel it's a good match between our two companies. EA's strong sales and distribution network complements our strong product-development efforts. This means we can concentrate on advancing the state of our software products while our retail accounts can count on the professional service that is offered by Electronic Arts."

Titles affected by the new distribution agreement include *Street Rod* (a '50s racing game), *BlockOut* (a 3-D puzzler) and *Tunnels of Armageddon* (an action/strategy challenge). The software is available for Amiga, Apple IIGS, Commodore 64/128, IBM



and Macintosh computers.

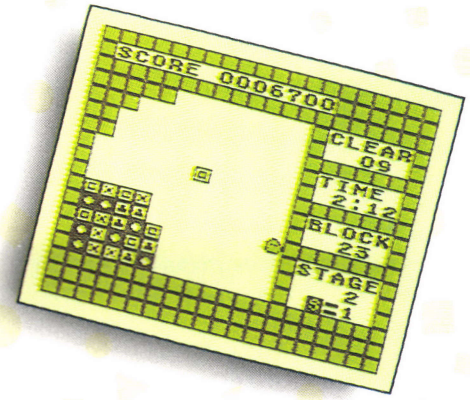
Industry Veteran Rewords Webster's

Richard Weiner, well-known in the electronic-gaming industry for his work as a mouthpiece for several companies, is putting his words where they'll do everyone some good—in a new dictionary of computer graphics, telecommunications, videotex and related terms. *Webster's New World Dictionary of Media and Communications* (Prentice Hall Trade, 538 pgs., $29.95) is a collection of over 30,000 definitions of technical terms and jargon.

The new dictionary defines relatively new high-tech vocabulary, such as "window," "mouse" and "scrolling," as well as other computer and animation terms. The reference book also provides the correct usage for such commonly misspelled words as "cel."



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In addition to the computer-graphic and videotex terms, it covers the vocabularies used in broadcasting, direct marketing, exhibitions, film, graphic arts, marketing, public relations, publishing, recording, theater and other communications fields.

Richard Weiner's company was formerly the public relations agency for Coleco, Epyx, Atari and other computer-entertainment companies.

NEC TurboGrafx-16 Gains Support

The TurboGrafx-16 continues to gain support as more companies reach agreements with NEC to make games for the system.

ICOM Simulations (the same crew that produced *Déjà Vu, Shadowgate* and *Uninvited* for computer play) is working on two CD-ROM games for the TurboGrafx-CD player. *Sherlock Holmes, Consulting Detective* is a mystery/adventure in which the gamer competes with the famous detective to solve three crimes in London. It features digitized footage of actors.

Camp California gamers participate in the adventures of a group of bears living the "surf and sun" California lifestyle. It contains four arcade sequences tied together by the bearish storyline, and the entire game uses cartoon-style animation.

Cinemaware has numerous games under development for NEC, including two CD-ROM titles. One of these is *It Came From the Desert*, which is currently available for Amiga and is soon to be released for play on both the IBM PC and the Atari ST. The CD-ROM version of *Desert* features footage of live actors in the battle against giant insects.

Alan Kay Predicts Future of Computers

Alan Kay, Apple Fellow, spoke to the 1990 Computer Reseller Summit Conference hosted by Fuji. The attendees, top executives from leading computer-reseller organizations, heard Kay's vision of the future of computers. Among the predictions:

- In less than five years, computers will have up to 50 times the power that they have today.
- The new computers will be networked, employing advanced cellular-phone and modem technology so they can be used anywhere.
- Computers and applications will be customized to meet the specific needs of the individual user.
- Voice activation and other easy-to-use interfaces will make computers more acceptable.
- The best computers will be full-time utensils and never be turned off, like telephones and clocks.

"The true measure of a computer's worth won't be how powerful it is, but rather how much its user can trust it and how much impact it will have on the user's everyday life," said Kay. "It will be the breadth of mundane applications that computers will perform that will signal when a revolution in personal computing has truly arrived."

Alan Kay is often called the "father of the personal computer" because of his ideas that later led to the development of a self-contained computer for personal and business use. He is one of a few select scientists called Apple Fellows. This group has independent charters to pursue innovative ideas for Apple's future.

Top Coin-Ops of April 1990

Figures courtesy of *Replay* magazine, based on an earnings-opinion poll of operators.

Best Upright Videos

1. *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* by Konami
2. *Hard Drivin'* by Atari
3. *Cyberball 2072* by Atari
4. *Off Road* by Leland
5. *Final Lap* by Atari
6. *Klax* by Atari
7. *Beast Busters* by SNK
8. *All Amer. Football* by Leland
9. *Turbo Out Run* by Sega
10. *Cyberball* by Atari

Best Coin-Op Software

1. *Final Fight* by Capcom
2. *WWF Superstars* by American Technos
3. *Golden Axe* by Sega
4. *Badlands* by Atari
5. *Toki* by Fabtek
6. *Buster Bros.* by Capcom
7. *Tecmo World Cup '90* by Tecmo
8. *Arch Rivals* by Midway
9. *Violence Fight* by Taito
10. *U. N. Squadron* by Capcom

Best New Uprights

1. *Four Trax* by Atari
2. *Line of Fire* by Sega
3. *Vapor Trail* by Data East

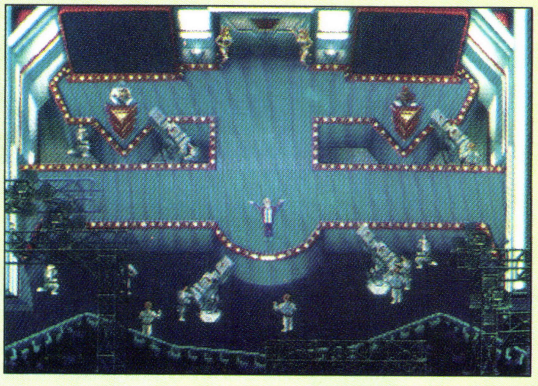
Game Show Inspires *Smash T.V.*

The latest coin-snatcher from Williams Electronics takes a futuristic game show



as its inspiration. Set in the year 1999, contestants in *Smash T.V.* compete for their lives in front of a studio audience. The players in this mythical television thriller use an armory of high-tech weapons, including grenades, lasers, smart bombs, force fields and more. Two gamers move through successive arenas, battling with drones, mutants and other monsters.

The Williams' coin-op is said to put more enemies on-screen at the same time than has ever before been seen in arcades. The company took advantage of a 32-bit hardware system that delivers more speech synthesis and greater sound fidelity. It features dual eight-way joystick controllers for two-player cooperative action and operator adjustments so the level of mayhem can be tailored to the specific location.



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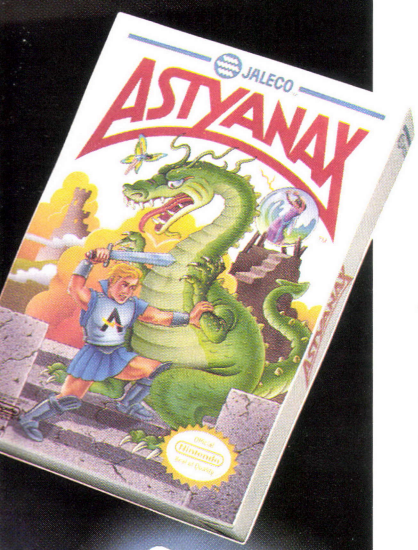
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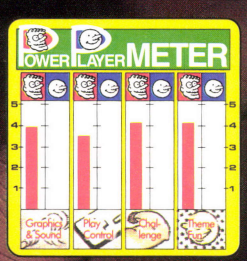


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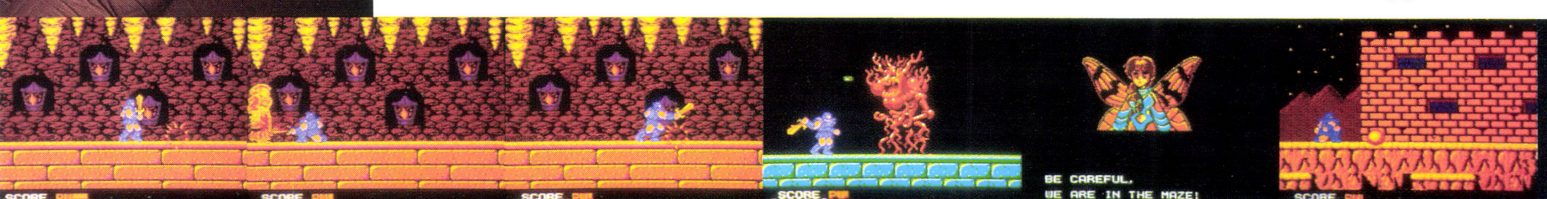


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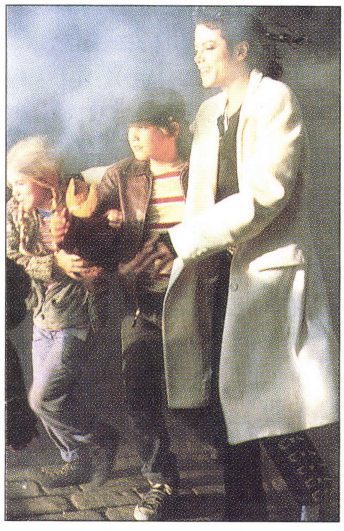


MOON

A VIDEO-GAME THRILLER

He's one of the most recognizable celebrities of our time. His albums sell millions as soon as they hit the shelves. His appearances draw throngs of *paparazzi*, microphones and autograph requests. He's a world-renowned singer, dancer and performer. Each day, thousands see his acting abilities in *Captain Eo*, a 3-D film that shows at Walt Disney World and Disneyland. He heads up a business empire that includes not only his recordings but also the Beatles, among others.

However, of all that he has done in his 31 years, one of his most exciting ventures will come to fruition shortly. Sega will help Michael Jackson add the title of game developer and video-game star to his growing list of accomplishments. This fall, *Michael Jackson's Moonwalker* will make its grand entrance for the Genesis console.



MJ and the kids on the run from Mr. Big and his gang.

THE SMOOTH CRIMINAL MEETS MR. BIG

Based on Jackson's *Smooth Criminal* video, though it features aspects from many of Jackson's previous videos as well, *Moonwalker* pits MJ against Mr. Big and his crew of thugs. These include such characters as cue-stick wielding brutes, black cats, leaping henchmen and relentless zombies.

It appears that Mr. Big has kidnapped many of the children that help give MJ his energy, the aura of good that surrounds him and, more important, the strength to fight his opponents. Each time he discovers a child, the power bar at the bottom of the screen that indicates his strength reserve increases. If the power bar should drop down to zero, MJ loses a "life." Also, at the bottom there's a count of how many children are left to find in that level.

The main function of MJ's aura is to provide him the ability to battle his adversaries with a variety of offensive moves. These include slinging his hat out like a boomerang; kicking and punching, which also sends out his aura, taking out any enemies it comes in contact with; and his most powerful weapon, his intense dancing ability. Everyone knows that MJ is the best dancer in the world; and when he starts his wild moves, you can bet that no one will keep up with him but



MJ cruises through a parking garage, and children can be found anywhere.

WALKER

by Andy Eddy







Top left: Mr. Big makes frequent appearances, but you won't have a chance to defeat him until you reach the last level.

Top right: Not all of Michael's confrontations are of the hostile variety.

Left: Even the dogs get down when Michael starts shakin' out some dance moves.

will instead drop to the floor from sheer exhaustion. (It's quite a sight to see the attacking Doberman pinschers get caught up in all the dancing too.)

Furthermore, each of the offensive button presses you use may cause different moves to occur. For example, a tap on the button that makes him spin (the buttons' functions can be custom-programmed under the Options selection before the game begins) will affect any enemies next to him. If you hold it down a little longer, it will cause him to fling his hat out at one of three ranges. Holding the button down for a duration will initiate the high-power dance just described (provided you have adequate energy supply)—and there are different types of dances depending on the enemy and level you're on.

Similarly, the attack button may cause MJ to kick out if he's standing; if he's crouched, he'll punch out; and if you hold up on the control pad, you'll fling his arm up (a good technique to get enemies a level over MJ's head). This diversity from the game's programmers makes *Moonwalker* more fun overall.



"Because I'm bad, I'm bad!" Michael puts up a smoke screen in the face of one of his poolroom adversaries.

Similarly, the child hostages have been hidden in all sorts of locations, from out in the open to behind a closed door or shrub to hiding in the trunk of a car. Opening a door, though, may reveal an enemy instead. You always have to be ready for a fight.

The layout of the game is quite elaborate, with many of the stages sporting multiple levels that can be accessed through manholes, elevators, staircases or plain platform-to-platform jumping.

Over the six levels (each level is broken up into three stages)





If MJ catches a shooting star (top left), he'll make a dramatic transformation into a robot (top right), which will enable him to cruise around the screen under rocket power and fire lasers and missiles at his opponents.

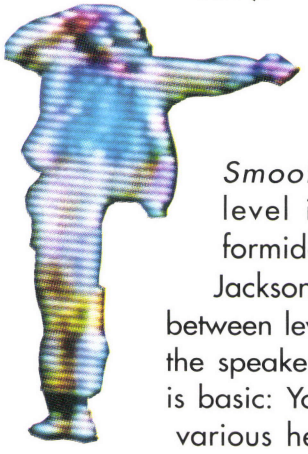


The Breakdown

As you go through *Moonwalker*, each level gets increasingly more intricate in its layout. The early stages are set up simply, with a series of floors to stroll through and only doors and windows to search for hostages. By the time you get to the fifth level, it's much more involved, with transporters, elevators and trapdoors that give you every opportunity possible to get lost. In fact, if you search from front to back, you may risk losing energy and lots of lives before you find the final hostage.

that make up *Moonwalker*, you'll go through various sections, each featuring different threats and surprises. Among the surprises is a shooting star that turns MJ into a humongous robot. The game programmers have designed it so that when you touch a particular child in a stage, a shooting star will come down from the sky. (In some levels it requires you to get a certain hostage first, such as Level 2-1. Make sure the first hostage you get is the child on the second floor, then go far to the left and you'll catch the star.) When you grab the star, MJ will magically transform into the robot, who has the ability to fly, fire lasers and launch homing missiles for a short period while the robot power lasts.

Here's a level-by-level dissection of what you'll find in *Moonwalker* (based on a prerelease version of the game, so certain things may change in the final production model):



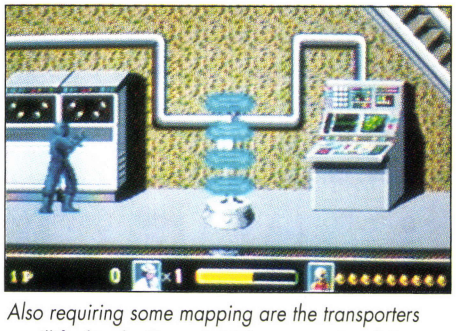
Level 1 takes you through the Club 30, to the thumping bass beat of *Smooth Criminal*. (Each level is backed up by a formidable clone of one of Jackson's famous songs; and between levels *Bad* pours out of the speaker.) Again, the format is basic: You need to neutralize various henchmen who punch and shoot at you, as well as cue-swinging nasties and show girls who slow your progress, while opening doors and windows in search of hostages. Floors are linked by stairways, the railings of which can be slid down, revealing yet another offensive technique for MJ to use against his foes.

When all the children are retrieved in a particular level, the screen goes black for a second and Chuckles, Jackson's pet chimp, appears and jumps onto MJ's shoulder. When the scene comes back into view, Chuckles points the way for MJ to go to get to a climactic confrontation where Jackson faces a slew of adversaries. Once they are cleared out, a final child will appear, and you'll be transported to the next stage of the game.

You're out on the street in Level 2 to face nasty dogs (complete with synthesized barking), time bombs and machine gunners, to the tune of *Beat It*. There are also multiple floors, such as you'll find in the parking garage and other sections that you'll need to use elevators and manholes to get to.



By the time you get to Level 4, you'll need to do some mapping of what you find and where.



Also requiring some mapping are the transporters you'll find in the Enemy's Hideaway on Level 5.

By the time you get to the Woods, which is the venue for Level 3, you'll be prepared for

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CIRCLE #116 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



just about anything. With *Thriller* pounding in the background, MJ is wandering through a fog-shrouded graveyard filled with dangerous zombies reminiscent of the 1983 *Thriller* video. The sight of these ghouls dancing, when MJ engages them *en masse*, is something to behold, and not likely to be found in any other video game.

With *Billie Jean* chiming along in the background, Level 4 brings you to the labyrinthlike cavern, where you'll face more zombies, as well as laser-firing thugs, spiders and boulders that are strewn around. The graphics really shine through here, as you'll see with the waterfall. What makes this level more complicated is that some of the doorways are hidden behind walls and must be broken through, which takes a chunk of your power away, leaving you more vulnerable to losing a life. From this point in the game, mapping out the locations of the child hostages is imperative to successful completion of the levels.

If you reach Level 5, you'll find yourself in the Enemy's Hideaway. The theme for this level is *Bad*, which also indicates what your chances of survival are. Not only are there scads of gun-toting adversaries (who require more effort on your part to destroy), but the ceilings are lined with laser guns that track you, moving platforms that hinder your progress and sparks that travel along the wall. As we noted before, the transporters also make the level tougher, because it's easy to get lost if you don't map your path to victory.

Level 6 changes the perspective drastically, from a scrolling adventure (which is how the rest of the game is designed) to a point-of-view shooting game. In Sega's words, this final level (which consists of only one stage, rather than three) is "the ultimate good against the ultimate evil." To complete the game, MJ changes into a battle plane and takes on Mr. Big, who sits atop his laser cannon on the hills outside his hideaway.

Sega's Savvy

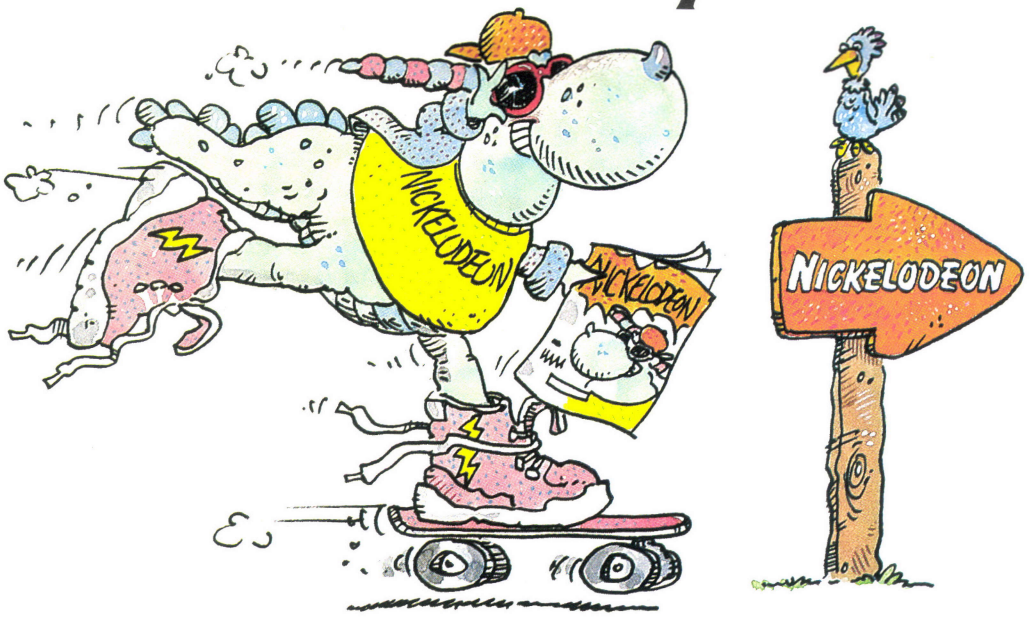
Sega has certainly pulled off a big coup by getting Michael Jackson to put his name on a game, though we are told that Jackson is an avid game player. Additionally, he's listed in the credits for the project, and made ongoing changes—not just alterations to the look of the game, but actual game play changes—during the development of *Moonwalker*. Updated cartridges were constantly provided to Jackson, and his suggestions were then passed on to the programmers working in Japan.

Sega is excited about *Moonwalker*, not only because of the obvious marketing attention Michael Jackson and his name draw, but because Sega feels it has a quality video game on its hands.

The detail of the graphics in Michael Jackson's Moonwalker *is only the tip of the iceberg. What we can't give you here is a sample of the fabulous soundtrack, with elaborate renditions of such MJ classics as* Thriller *and* Smooth Criminal*, which show off the scope of the Genesis' 10-channel sound capabilities.*



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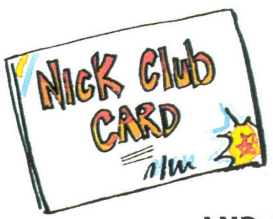
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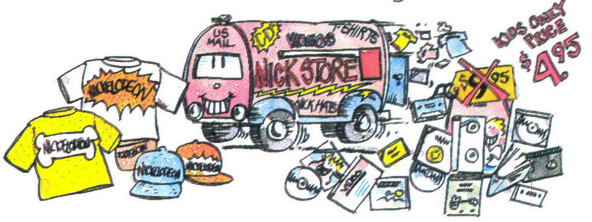
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TA4 NB

CIRCLE #118 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

VIDEO GAME REVIEWS

Michael Andretti's World GP

AMERICAN SAMMY

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($45)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	**3**	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10

American Sammy's *Michael Andretti's World GP* is a Grand Prix racing simulation featuring 16 courses from around the world and 13 famous racing personalities to contend against. One can choose to either challenge a friend, compete one-on-one against any of the big 13 or in the Grand Prix competition where four drivers compete simultaneously.

Each of the tracks has a difficulty rating, and each of the drivers possess their own unique driving habits. When playing in the one- or two-player modes, one of four different machines may be chosen: A Chevy Lola V8 turbo, a Honda V10, a Ferrari V12 or a Mugen V8. Each has different horsepower ratings, in addition to varied torque at different speeds. Only one of the four is an automatic, so there is plenty to busy oneself with while sliding around the track's twists and turns.

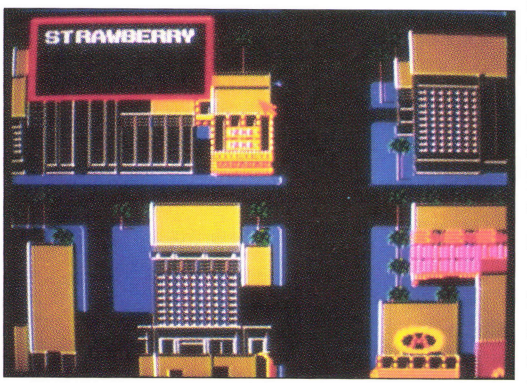
When starting the game, one may choose to race alone in the practice mode in order to become accustomed to the track. Before the practice begins, Michael Andretti appears on-screen to provide the inside dope on the areas of the track that deserve special notice. In the two-player mode, the screen is divided horizontally so that both players have their own separate screen.

In both of these first two modes, one chooses the track, the car and the number of laps before the race can get under way. Once the flag is raised, players must negotiate turns at a safe speed to avoid flying off the road or spinning out of unsuccessful turns. A tire-wear indicator is provided to help decide when a pit stop is in order, though fuel is not taken into account.

If you want to race against one of 13 built-in drivers, simply choose that driver's name as Player 2, and it's off to the races. By choosing computer drivers for both players, one can simply sit back and watch as they jockey for position in the fight to the finish line. In the Grand Prix mode, the player is assigned a car and must first qualify for each track before being allowed to participate in the actual race with three other qualified drivers. This is a time-consuming portion of the game, and a password option is available to let one continue a race at a later date.







American Sammy has brought Grand Prix racing excitement to the NES in its *Michael Andretti's World GP* game.

There are driving games that strive for realism and those that strive more for action or pure enjoyment. Unfortunately, this game has trouble fulfilling either tenet. As one proceeds from track to track, the background changes, but only minimally. When selecting your vehicle, the four types are well-represented graphically; however, once the race begins, they all look similar. On the same note, while the pit area was done adequately, there is only a sign to indicate its location as one passes it. To pull into the pit, pull off onto the grass, and the pit area will appear after churning aimlessly through the grass for a few seconds.

The computer cars have little if any problem negotiating the turns from track to track, but human opponents may have more of a problem. Instead of the car turning when the controller is held down in one direction or another, the controller must be tapped several times in the direction that you want to steer in order to make the turn happen. When you are flying through a hairpin turn at 100 km/h, this is not an easy task. Gear shifting the manually equipped car worked well and took little time to get accustomed to.

Sound effects are present, but do little to increase excitement. The roar of your engine sounds more like the whine of a blender, and combined with the wishy-washy graphics, there isn't much to entice a person into the game.

Apparently, a lot of effort was put forth to provide such a nice variety of tracks and people to race against. However, the appeal of *Michael Andretti's World GP* is missing. As many people will realize, it takes much more than a famous name to make the game.

—Brent Walker

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CIRCLE #119 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

King of Casino

NEC

For the TurboGrafx-16 ($49.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

Okay, I'll be honest: I dislike gambling simulations. I'd rather sit down with a good adventure than trade greenbacks with an electronic dealer. Still, I have to admit that NEC's *King of Casino* is the most complete gambling simulation I've seen—at least as far as options go. From checking into a fancy hotel to flaunting cash in a casino, it's all here.

The object of *King of Casino* is to build a $10,000 stake into a cool $10,000,000—a formidable task for any couch gambler. Believe me, only a *really* hot player can multiply his cash a thousand fold.

Start your date with lady luck at the hotel's front desk. Register all players by name, and pick up your $10,000 stake. Next, retire to your room, where musical entertainment (there are several musical scores available) is provided, get your password (10 times max), view a graph summarizing your wins and losses or dial up ratings (difficulty and size) for each of the 15 casinos.

Armed with the latest casino ratings, you next wander the streets of a mini-Vegas, in search of your chosen gambling place. Although each casino offers the same games—poker, blackjack, roulette, slot machines and keno—each maintains different minimum and maximum bets.

Inside the casino, you walk from table to table, looking for the right game. Each casino has many games going at once. For example, in the Strawberry casino you can choose between five poker tables, 10 blackjack tables, two roulette tables and 18 slot machines. (Each casino has only one keno board.) Find the game that suits your finances, then rub your rabbit's foot.

How are the games? Poker is cheesy. You can't play against the dealer or against other players at the table. Instead, you draw for the best hand, then get paid predetermined amounts for two pair or better. No bluffing and no betting—except for the starting bet.

The slots work well and look nice, but produce some annoying sound effects. What's more, the screen blinks between each pull of the handle as the TG-16 redraws the screen. Rough on the eyes.

In blackjack you play against the dealer. The standard rules apply, including taking insurance, splitting and doubling down.

Roulette has the most impressive graphics of all the games, although only the edge of the on-screen wheel is shown when it spins. Still, the betting table is nicely drawn.

Keno is dullsville. You use a cursor to mark your numbers, then press **RUN** to start the game. The winning numbers appear on the screen in a most uninteresting manner. No attempt is made to create a shred of suspense.



Although it offers many options, *King of Casino* feels like a game that was yanked prematurely from the programmers' hands. The keno simulation, for example, is functional but stripped to the minimum. Another example is the ubiquitous "Do you want to play?" prompt that appears each time you select a table. If you choose yes, the game begins; if you choose no, instead of exiting the game, the prompt is repeated.

If you've got a TurboGrafx-16 and want a gambling simulation, *King of Casino* is okay. It's not, however, the kind of quality program that TurboGrafx-16 owners have come to expect.

—Clayton Walnum

NEC Technologies, Inc.,
1255 Michael Drive
Wood Dale, IL 60191-1094
(312) 860-9500



NEC's *King of Casino* takes you on an adventure through the world of high rolling, without the risks and dangers of Las Vegas or Atlantic City.

Burai Fighter

TAXAN

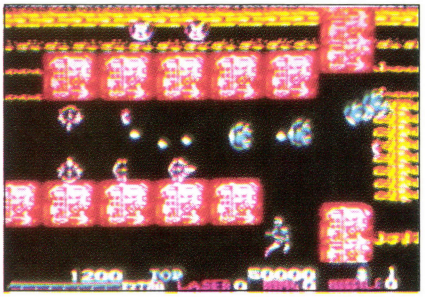
For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($39.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10

Taxan's *Burai Fighter* follows the familiar theme of "evil extraterrestrials waging war for domination of the universe." In this particular incarnation, the Burai, a race of super-brains from way out yonder have an army of cyborg warriors—partially living, partially robotic. As the hero of the game, the player's job is to traverse seven different areas defeating the different enemies, along with the standard boss bad guy lying in wait at the culmination of each round.

Starting with a standard gun, a player may build up any of three more powerful weapons through retrieval of power-ups that appear along the way: laser, ring and missile weapons. Each of the aforementioned has three levels of increased firepower. A speed-up power-up is also available, as well as small red pods that may be gathered for use either as a cobalt or "smart" bombs or to gain an extra life, depending upon the amount of pods accumulated. The cobalt bombs work well in clearing the screen of enemies and bullets, but unfortunately are useless against the boss enemies. Other "goodies" are supposedly to be found scattered throughout ten hidden rooms, but this player was unable to find one.







As the hero in Taxan's *Burai Fighter*, you must take on the army of cyborg warriors—partially living, partially robotic—that the Burai have dispatched to capture the universe for them.

There are four difficulty levels—eagle, albatross, ace and ultimate—though the final level may not be played until the right password is first acquired. As each of the areas is completed, a password is given that enables one in future plays to skip that area when the password is used. The differences between the difficulty levels consist of a larger variety of enemies and more enemy shots on-screen. The game becomes nearly impossible by the third level, and frustration will likely lead to frequent use of the slow-motion feature (if your controller supports it). Bonus points awarded at the end of the round are dependent upon the skill level and the amount of weapon power-ups you finish with. The more power-ups and the higher the difficulty level, the more points you're awarded.

As with most games of this type, the main challenge lies in memorizing the enemy's flight patterns, though the speed of these adversaries and alternate vertical and horizontal scrolling make the task much harder. The combined scrolling adds a challenge in itself, in that, until an area becomes familiar, it's easy to get trapped in dead ends.

Each weapon has various advantages over the different enemies, and the pros and cons of each are especially important to consider when deciding the best weapon to use against bosses. The right

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Look for other games in MicroPlay's Masters of Strategy Series.

CIRCLE #120 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

weapon charged up to full power is a great help in blasting through the rounds, but the weapon in use will be reset to zero upon the player's death. Furthermore, the weapons can't be changed until a power-up of that type is secured.

Autofire is useless because your shots are flying at a fairly fast clip to begin with. But by holding down the fire button, one may continuously fire in a particular direction while moving around. If you manage to survive until the end of a round, a boss enemy must be confronted and defeated before advancing. While they aren't always easy to defeat, they aren't particularly impressive or anything out of the ordinary.



As with most games of this type, *Burai Fighter*'s main challenge lies in memorizing the enemy's flight patterns and deciding the proper weapon to use.

Overall, the graphics are adequate for the game, but they don't help create the appropriate atmosphere to make the game interesting. The backgrounds don't really look like the manufacturing bases that they are supposed to be, but rather like a tile tunnel landscape with an alien twist. Eighteen different enemies populate the bases, each distinct from the rest in appearance and method of attack, but none are particularly detailed. Finally, the scrolling is smooth enough, but flickering is fairly frequent when more than three or four enemies occupy the screen.

While *Burai Fighter* is certainly challenging enough, it doesn't break much new ground. When each of the seven levels are cleared once, there really isn't much to keep one interested enough to wade through all seven another three times. This one may appeal to fanatics of this sort of game, but most will want to pass on it upon closer inspection.

—B. W.

Taxan
161 Nortech Parkway
San Jose, CA 95134
(408) 946-3400

Bigfoot

ACCLAIM

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($44.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Bigfoot is now a video game for the Nintendo. This isn't the fabled "missing link" Bigfoot that has eluded anthropologists for years. We're talking about the truck. You know, the one with the two-story-tall tires? The one that can run over scores of autos in a single sweep? The famed vehicle that has helped televised truck-and-tractor pulls become the next great sensation since professional wrestling?

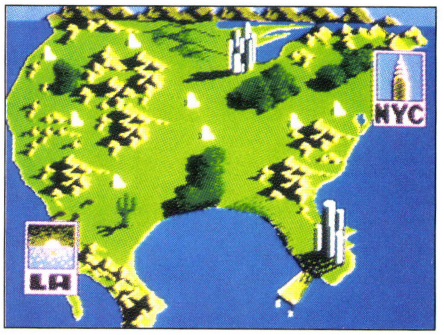
Yes, it's true. Monster truck racing has come home for the NES, courtesy of Acclaim, the same folks who brought us *Wrestlemania*. Now, before you think "Oh, no! Not again!"—as I did initially—let me state right away that upon first trying out *Bigfoot*, I was pleasantly surprised at how good a two-player contest it is. Really.

Bigfoot puts you in control of a monster truck, a pickup modified with enormous tires and a supercharged engine. The game pits you against the computer or a human player in a cross-country race across the American continent, from the West Coast to the finish line in New York.

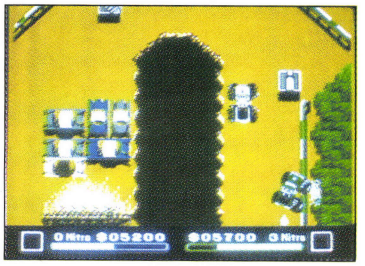
The first race from California starts out aptly enough: Girls in bikinis are depicted standing by your towering truck and those of your opponents. From there, a cartoonish weather map is displayed, plotting out your course.



The actual race consists of a vertically scrolling screen with the trucks looking a lot like Tonka toys. The object is simple: Race to the finish before your opponent. Boxes can be picked up along the way that will give your truck useful modifications or much needed cash for repairs.



After the race, it's off to the track event. Here, you can repair your vehicle if it's damaged. Depending on which city you stop in, events may include a tractor pull, mud race, a grueling hill climb and various obstacle courses with—of course—plenty of cars to crunch.



Monster truck racing has come to the NES, thanks to Acclaim's *Bigfoot* game, which features an intense cross-country competition.

There is one sore spot about *Bigfoot*—and I mean this quite literally. The track events require you to rock the control pad right and left with your left thumb while shifting gears and activating the Super Charger with your right thumb by pressing the buttons. Anybody accustomed to playing NES games knows that continuously "alternating...as fast and hard as you can" on the NES control pad with your left thumb (as the instruction manual directs) can result in minor injuries. Namely, a sore thumb.

Strangely enough, the instructions also advise to use *both* thumbs on the con-

troller pad to gain optimum power for your truck. But then it fails to mention that you won't have another hand with which to shift gears or activate the Super Charger when necessary. It seems that the manual was written for individuals with three upper body appendages in mind.

Take my advice: Put the controller on a hard, flat surface (such as a tabletop), and rock the controller pad with your left forefinger and middle finger. Besides this minor point, *Bigfoot* makes an excellent game for two players. As evidenced when you play against the computer, the game's solid programming shows that it was designed primarily for head-to-head play. (The computer never needs to shift its vehicle in the track events and, thus, has a clear advantage.)

In fact, having experienced the fierce one-on-one competition demonstrated in *Bigfoot* makes me want to go out and witness the exhilaration of a real monster truck race.

Well...almost.

—Howard H. Wen

Acclaim Entertainment, Inc.
189 South Street
Oyster Bay, NY 11771
(516) 624-9300

A Nightmare on Elm Street

LJN

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($44.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

When writer/director Wes Craven unleashed the original *A Nightmare on Elm Street* movie back in 1984, no one could have predicted the popularity of the film's horribly scarred villain, Freddy Krueger. Like any self-respecting cinema slasher, he keeps coming back. This time, he's the master of ceremonies in LJN's latest NES cartridge.

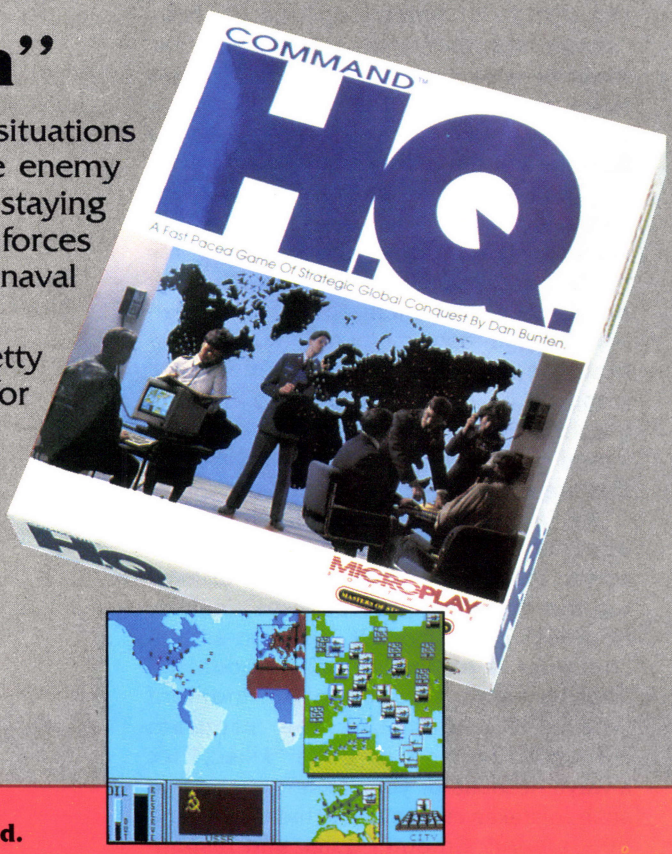
Up to four players can participate in the battle to free Elm Street from Freddy's diabolical clutches. As a teenager whose dreams are troubled by frighteningly real visions of horror (courtesy of you-know-who), you must visit each building on Elm Street and collect Freddy's bones, which will later be tossed into the school's furnace. On the way, you'll meet the usual

"Face the Opposition"

Decisions are getting harder to make; global situations tougher to analyze. You're not sure who the enemy is any more. You just know that you're barely staying half a guess ahead of him. Your air and land forces are together. If you could just coordinate your naval power, you'd manage to stay on top.

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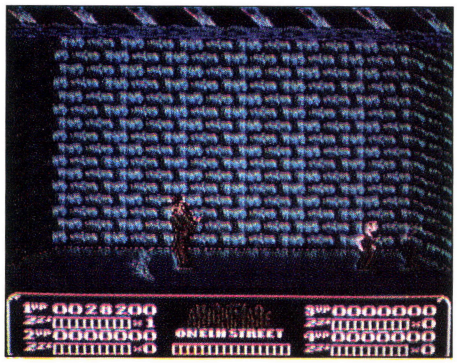
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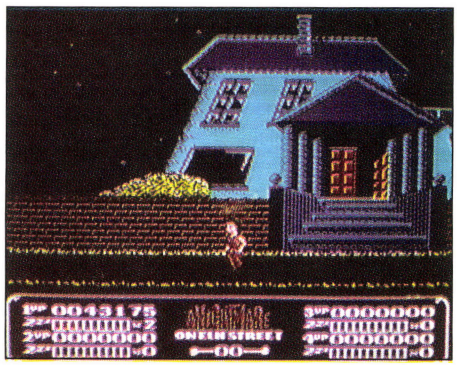
CIRCLE #121 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

assortment of creatures, including bats, rats, zombies and giant spiders.

Naturally, there is one other complication: If your on-screen "sleep meter" runs out, you'll doze off and enter a nightmare world where Freddy's influence is immediately apparent. The locations and obstacles are all exactly where they were when you were awake, but your opponents have become Freddy's pets, many of them with little Freddy-heads in place of their own.

And of course, there are infrequent encounters with the man himself. Like the "Get Ready...GO!" screens in the old *Wizard of Wor* arcade game, Krueger's appearances are heralded by huge letters that scream "FREDDY'S COMING!" He may not be wearing his trademark red-and-black striped sweater, but there's no mistaking that razor-clawed glove—particularly when there are oversized duplicates of the glove bursting out of the ground beneath your feet. Ouch!





Freddy will have you on the edge of your seat when he comes on the screen, as he does in LJN's *Nightmare on Elm Street* for the NES.

In its incarnation as an NES cartridge, *A Nightmare on Elm Street* is basically a horizontally scrolling beat-'em-up game, like *Double Dragon* without the martial-arts angle. Though your character can only punch, jump and duck, you do have the option of becoming one of three "dream warrior" characters during the nightmare sequences. These alter egos have special powers and can throw weapons, making it easier to defeat your opponents from a distance.

I have to admit that this game is much more fun than I expected it to be. I'm instinctively suspicious of any video game that's based on a film or TV show, but *Elm Street* is a successful merger of two different entertainment mediums. Most important, the game play is good enough to stand up on its own. The sharp, colorful graphics are instantly appealing, and the varied music sets the mood with themes that are scary but fun.

As in the films, special effects are important; the movielike wavering of the screen that occurs when entering or leaving the dream sequences is particularly impressive. Best of all, your on-screen character is extremely easy to control. There's never a questionable moment where it seems like the program responded unfairly. If you're "killed," it's always because of your own mistake, and such mistakes can be corrected the second time around. Smooth, quick and responsive, it plays like every video game should.

At the Consumer Electronics Show in June of 1988, LJN announced the licensing of the *Elm Street* name and Freddy character for an NES game. The promotional materials they distributed looked extremely promising, with highly detailed screen shots and a written description of a game where *you* controlled Freddy Krueger. Two years have passed, and that germ of a game concept has been turned inside out. Happily, the final version of *A Nightmare on Elm Street* is a pretty decent game. A lot of people are sure to buy it because of the name alone, so it's a relief to find that there's more to it than Freddy's pretty face.

—Chris Bieniek

LJN Toys, Ltd.
1107 Broadway
New York, NY 10010
(800) 233-TALK

Tombs and Treasure

ACTIVISION

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($39.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Tombs and Treasure is a graphic adventure game that is challenging, fun and witty. While beginning adventurers may find it a bit difficult, anyone who has had any experience with these games will get much enjoyment out of solving the mystery.

The beginning puzzle is that a famous professor and his team have disappeared in some Mexican ruins in the jungle. You and the professor's daughter, plus a guide named José—why are they always named José?—start out to look for him. All you have to go on is the professor's ruined notebook, only parts of which are legible.

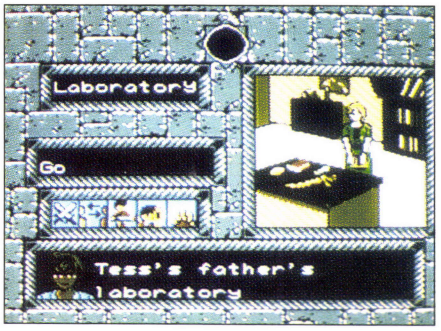
The screen has five main parts. The largest window shows the current scenery, as viewed from your vantage point. Two small windows describe the structure you are currently in and what you can see. The long window across the bottom of the screen displays explanatory text and the person in your party (remember, there are three of you) you are currently working with. You can switch between members of your party, which you will need to do

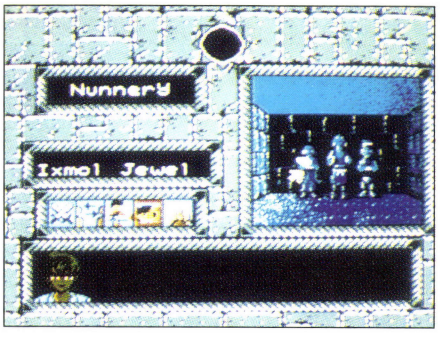
often. For example, you are the only one who can use the sword to defeat the monsters, while the professor's daughter can play the pipes to charm some beasts, and José is the only one strong enough to open certain doors.

Finally, there is a scrolling window that shows the actions you can take—push, pull, drop, smash, use, etc. To select an action, you move the control pad until the white square is on the action you want, then press the "A" button. If the action you select requires an object (such as the use command), you will be allowed to select the object from either the visible scenery or the inventory of items you have picked up.

There is a lot of ground to cover in *Tombs and Treasures*. Multiple structures dot the landscape: the High Priest's tomb, a nunnery, the Well of Sacrifices (shudder) and many others. The only way to discover what is in a structure is to enter it; there are no signs on the outside of any.

Once you enter, there are riddles to be solved, monsters to be defeated and items to be recovered for later use. One trick you have to master early on is how to join objects together to make them work differently. For example, the sword will kill some creatures, but must be joined with a jewel in order to kill others. Clues abound, not only in stone tablets but in José's quite astonishing knowledge of Mayan folklore!





Activision's *Tombs and Treasures* is a enjoyable graphic adventure for the NES that is challenging, fun and witty.

Tombs and Treasures will take a long time to solve, not only because things must be done in the right order (if you don't want to end up dead), but also because the right character must be used for the right task. Fortunately, you are given a password at various points in the game, so you can come back and pick up where you left off.

This is an unusual game that will definitely appeal to the adventure gamers out there. The best advice I can give is this: If you like adventure games, go out and buy this one.

—David Plotkin

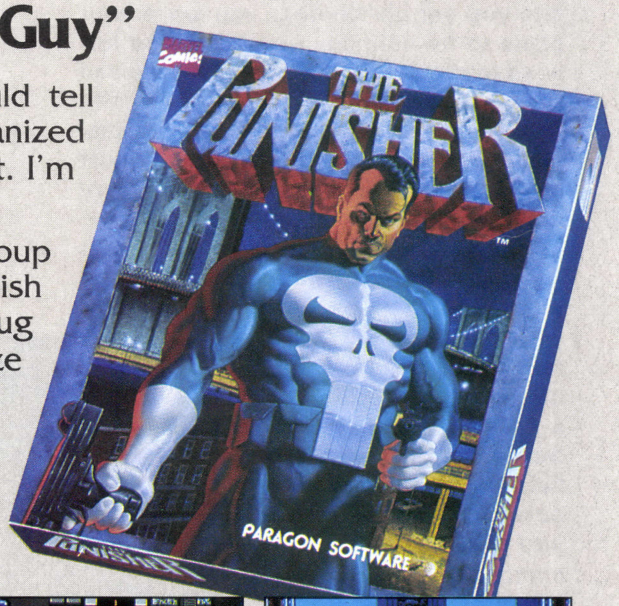
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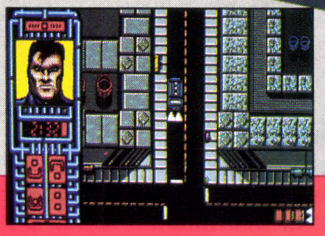
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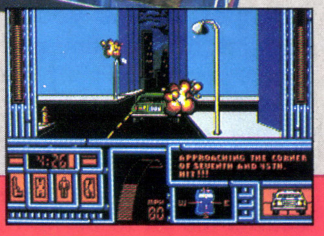


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Top Gun II

KONAMI

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($44.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

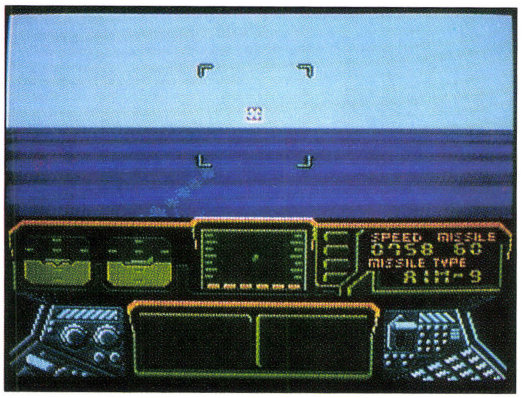
Top Gun II is a graphically exciting air-combat game, featuring all manner of enemy targets, one-on-one battles with Russian aces and a head-to-head mode that lets you go against a companion. It is a difficult game, much like the original *Top Gun*, but one that is sure to put your joystick in grave danger of being broken.

The opening screen allows you several choices. In the one-player game, you go against increasingly challenging waves of enemy forces. In "one-player vs." mode, you must fly against enemy aces, going one-on-one with the best (and they are very good indeed).

In "two-player vs." mode, you choose to go against a friend. In this unique combat, the screen splits in half horizontally across the middle. Each of you takes a control pad, and, using your own view (perhaps sneaking a glance at your friend/enemy's view), tries to shoot the opposing pilot down. An auxiliary screen lets you set up whether you want your plane to fly normally (press the pad forward to climb) or in reverse (press the pad forward to dive). Oddly enough, the reverse setting is actually the way a real plane flies; so if you are a pilot, you must be sure to set the controls this way every time you play.

Your plane is equipped with two weapons: a cannon with unlimited ammunition and missiles. To fire the cannon, you hold down the "B" button, while a quick double-press of the "B" button fires a missile. You may choose from three kinds of missiles. Each of the missiles is more powerful than the last, but you can carry a smaller number of the more powerful missiles. As you can imagine, it's sometimes difficult to get a missile off in the heat of battle.

The "A" button serves as the throttle for your jet. Pressing the control pad twice quickly to the left or right causes the jet to barrel roll in that direction. This too, is a maneuver that is hard to call up on command.



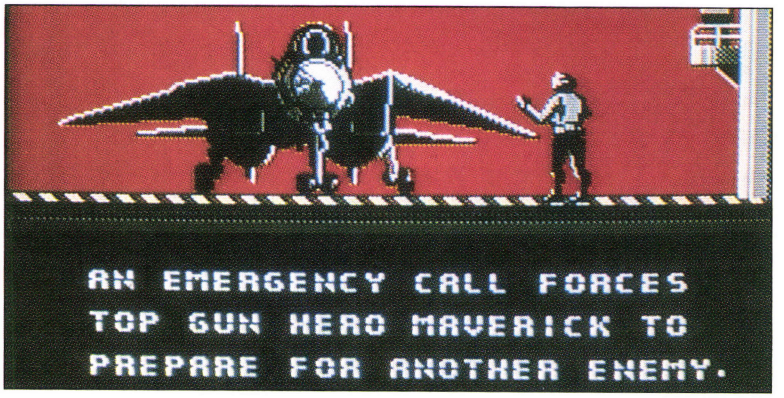
Hot on the heels of their initial success, Konami has again put you at the controls in an aerial dogfight in *Top Gun II*.

The view in *Top Gun II* is "first person," out-the-front cockpit window of your jet. You can see the sky, clouds, ocean and enemies through the cockpit window. Below the window is a series of warning lights, an artificial horizon and radar. The targeting cursor in the cockpit window is used when firing the cannons, and an arrow flashes when you have a missile lock on an enemy aircraft.

The radar is important because it not only shows other aircraft, but also incoming missiles. You can be shot down from the rear, so you need to keep an eye on the radar and the warning light that alerts you to a threatening missile.

Top Gun II's one-player game has three stages. In the first stage, you must contend with a squadron of aircraft, sink nuclear subs and, finally, destroy a large bomber. In Stage 2, the tanks take center stage, and you must avoid *their* missiles and eventually do battle with a huge Hind chopper. In Stage 3, you must fly through a lightning storm and confront a *Star Wars* space shuttle. Through all of this, of course, the enemy is throwing everything possible at you. As a result, the game is quite difficult, and it will be a while before you even reach the termination of the first level. You can't save a game, nor is there a password, so you must play from the beginning every time.





Top Gun II is considerably better than the original, with better graphics, much more play action and more varied scenarios. Just be prepared to spend a lot of time practicing and learning to use your weapons and instruments effectively.

—D. P.

Konami
900 Deerfield Parkway
Buffalo Grove, IL 60089
(708) 215-5100

The Battle of Olympus

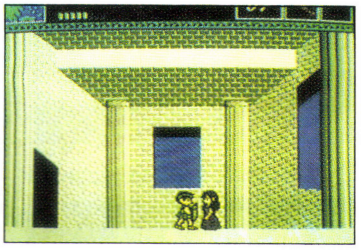
BRØDERBUND

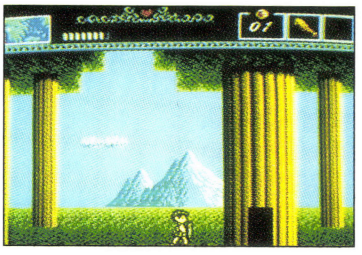
For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($39.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

Back in a time when gods ruled all men, there lived a brave warrior named Orpheus. Orpheus was in love with Helene, the most beautiful girl in the land, and she loved Orpheus in return. But before they could be married, Helene died, the victim of a poisonous snake. Orpheus grieved. Aphrodite, the goddess of love, moved by Orpheus' pain, told him that his lady was not really dead but that her soul was being held captive by Hades, the god of the underworld. Orpheus swore he would find Helene and return her to the physical world. And so, a quest began.

The Battle of Olympus is an adventure game in the tradition of *Zelda II*. In between finding your way through strange lands and battling savage enemies, you must search for important objects and gather clues from townspeople. Many of the gods will help you defeat Hades and return Helene to her own world. Each of the gods—Zeus, Athena, Ares, Poseidon, Apollo, Hephaestus, Artemis and Hermes—have special items that they will give to you when you pray in their temple.





Brøderbund's *The Battle of Olympus* takes you back in history to the time when gods ruled all men, and Hades reigned over the underworld.

Finding the temples is tricky. As in any good arcade adventure, many creatures will try to discourage you from your quest. Dozens of minor enemies populate the lands of Arcadia, Phthia, Attica, Argolis, Peloponnisos, Laconia, Phrygia and Crete. In addition, you must defeat the boss creatures Cerberus, Centaur, Lamia, Minotaur, Talos, Hydra, Cyclops and others; each a savage fighter.

As you fight your way to Helene, keep an eye out for certain objects. Olives are used as money, and bay leaves restore your strength. The golden apple, nectar and ambrosia will also help to keep you strong and healthy.

In order to gain access to some areas, you need certain special items. Some can be obtained from the gods. Others are

"This Is No Joy Ride"

Our ship burst through the Spinward Marches like a flash of light. My heart's pounding fast. Five trained soldiers running on nervous energy. Someone's racing up behind us. I can't tell who or where they are. If I can just get us through the Yres system, we may get to the starport in time.

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offered to you by friendly characters in the game, usually after you have performed some service for them. These items include the staff of fennel, which throws fire; the salamander shield, which protects you from fire; the harp of apollo, which allows you to fly; the Trojan pitcher, which carries healing nectar; and the sandals of Hermes, which increase your jump.

Most of the areas in *The Battle of Olympus* are vertically scrolling arcade scenes. Typically, each scene has many exits that lead to other scenes in the game. Keeping track of what exit goes where is an adventure in itself!

The graphics are high quality, with colorful backgrounds and detailed, well-animated enemies. The sound effects and music are acceptable, though nothing spectacular.

The Battle of Olympus, although not particularly original, is an intriguing adventure; one that will keep you at your control pad for many hours. If you've a thirst for a magical quest filled with mythical beings and ancient gods, you might find this one heaven sent.

—C. W.

Brøderbund Software
17 Paul Drive
San Rafael, CA 94903
(415) 479-1170



The Battle of Olympus is an intriguing adventure that will keep you at your control pad for many hours.

Shove It!—The Warehouse Game

DREAMWORKS

For the Sega Genesis ($40.00)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	**2**	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10

For now, I'm going to refrain from describing the scenario to *Shove It!—The Warehouse Game*. Not only is it pointless and has little to do with game play, but it's also questionable. This much you need to know: You're "Stevedore," a warehouseman who moves crates for a living. (The "Stupidest Video Game Character Name" award has a new contender.)

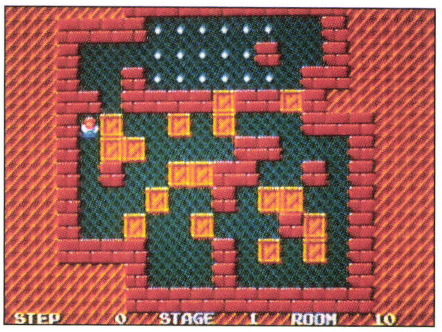
You maneuver Stevedore while he pushes crates onto specific areas of the warehouse floor designated by white dots. In order to advance to another room, Stevedore has to move all crates onto these dots.

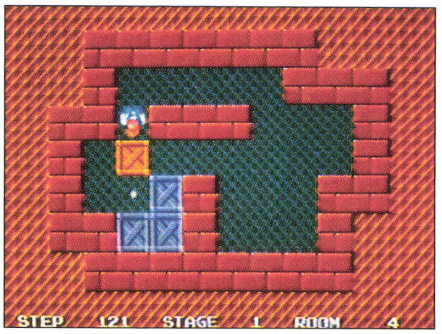
The catch is that each room of the warehouse is set up as a maze. Some layouts are simple, others complex. Thus, you can accidentally move crates into cornered areas and be prevented from ever moving them again. The room must then be replayed. That's the challenge: Place boxes on the dots while trying to avoid pushing them into immovable areas in the process.

There are 16 levels of ten warehouse rooms each. Completing eight of the ten advances you to the next level, where you are given a password to enter for future play. Rooms in a level can be played in any order you wish, which is especially nice. There's an "instant-replay" option for retracing Stevedore's steps to see where mistakes were made, but its intended function proves useless.

If this sounds a lot like *Boxxle* for the Game Boy, that's because it's similar. A game-screen editor is also available in *Shove It!—The Warehouse Game*, allowing you to design and play your own rooms. However, these homemade boards can't be saved for future enjoyment.

If you were one of the many who plunked down $200 for a Genesis because of its superb graphic and sound capabilities, look for these features elsewhere because your system's abilities aren't stretched here. Graphics are incredibly flat, and the animated sequences are disappointing. Granted, visuals in a puzzle video game aren't usually—or don't have to be—detailed. But the simplistic yet symbolic way in which screens in *Chip's Challenge*, a similar puzzle game for the Lynx, are rendered proves that graphics need not be compromised.





As puzzle games hold their popularity with game players, you'll see more games like Dreamworks' *Shove It!—The Warehouse Game* for the Genesis.

The soundtrack is difficult to describe. A never-ending, repetitive mish-mash of every piece of elevator music you've heard in your lifetime might be the only way to describe it. No kidding. The "music" never even changes a tune or stops. It just drones on and on, assaulting the auditory lobe of your brain.

Back to the story. Just why is Stevedore working at this lousy warehouse anyway? Because he's been rejected by a woman, thanks to the beat-up clunker he drives. Thus, page 3 of the *Shove It!—The Warehouse Game* manual narrates: "...you see her as a challenge. To win this babe you'll have to get the hottest, most luxurious sports car ever made!" It goes on to describe the kind of car needed to woo this "babe," right down to the leather interior and stereo system. Then there's page 9: "[Stevedore]'s... breathing hard thinking about all the money he's making and of course...the girl."

GAME BOY

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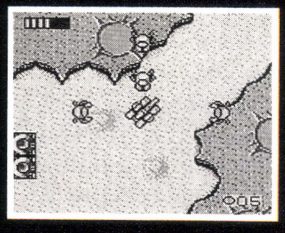
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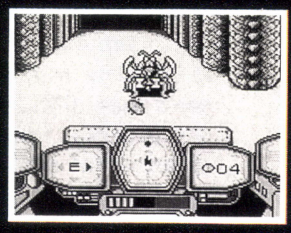
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As far as marketing goes, this is dumb. Sega's likely to turn off a potential female market for a game that could have been somewhat enjoyed by both sexes. If this outrageous narrative is intended to be a joke, well, treating players like idiots after they've purchased a $50 game isn't a laughing matter.

Puzzle games should demonstrate a level of intelligence and game play that is either deceptively simple or ingeniously complex. *Boxxle* and *Chip's Challenge* are two examples. *Shove It!—The Warehouse Game* displays neither. You'd think with all the scads of 16-bit power available that the programmers would've designed something surpassing both *Boxxle* and *Chip's*. Rather, *Shove It!—The Warehouse Game* comes in dead last, bogged down by redundant play and a silly objective.

Like Stevedore's old car, you'll want to trade this one up for something better.

—H. H. W.

Sega of America
573 Forbes Boulevard
South San Francisco, CA 94080
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Golden Axe

SEGA

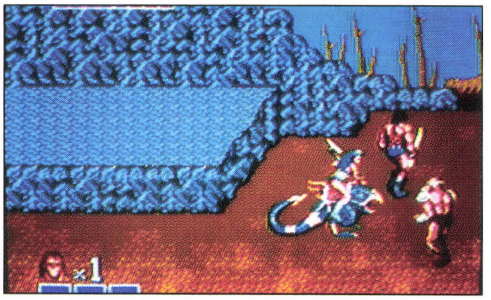
For the Sega Master System ($39.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

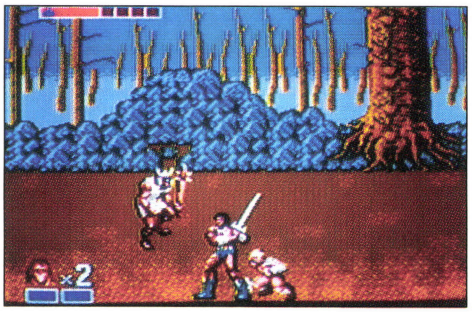
Hot on the heels of its success on the Genesis comes *Golden Axe* for the Sega Master System. The graphics and sound have been toned down somewhat, but the story remains the same. Death Adder's minions are wreaking havoc throughout Yuria. Now the king and his daughter have been kidnapped, and the Golden Axe has been stolen. It's up to you to travel all the lands, defeating Death Adder's soldiers and creatures. At the end, you must face and defeat Death Adder Jr. and then Death Adder himself.

The SMS version of *Golden Axe* is similar to the Genesis one, although significant changes have been made. In the Genesis version, you could choose between three different warriors, each of which had his own magical powers. In order to save on graphics data (I assume), the SMS version provides only a single warrior for which you can choose one of the three types of magic. Other changes include the deletion of the options screen. You can no longer set the level of play or select practice modes.

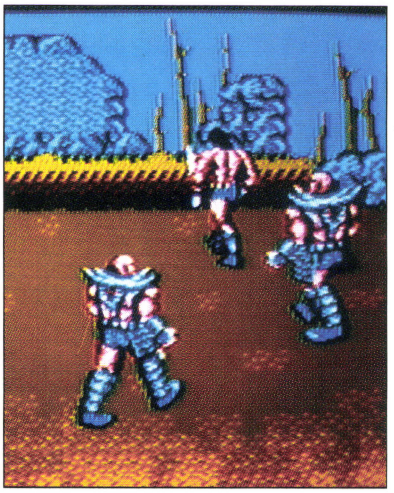
On your quest for the Golden Axe, you must fight many types of warriors, each of which has his own strengths and weaknesses. Depending on how you manipulate your controller buttons, you have several modes of attack at your command: stabs, slices, throws and others. Perhaps the most effective is the jump attack, where you leap into the air and strike at your enemy with savage downswings.



Your magic is also an essential weapon, one that will give you an important edge in many of the fearsome battles you'll participate in. At the beginning of the game, you can choose earth magic, fire magic or thunder magic. A well-planned magical attack will significantly weaken a band of attackers. You can recharge your magic and strength by stealing jars from elves, which appear regularly throughout the game.



Sometimes, you'll be attacked by a warrior riding a bizarrian, one of Death Adder's attack beasts. Bizarrians are fearsome fighters who attack by sweeping pointed tails or by shooting flames and fireballs. Luckily, you can turn the tables by dismounting your enemy and riding the bizarrian yourself. Staying in the saddle, though, requires a quick hand on the controller pad!



Golden Axe, Sega's hot arcade game, has now made its appearance for Sega Master System owners. They should be pleased by the detailed graphics and brutal game play.

During your search for Death Adder, you'll pass through eight stages, including the woods, Turtle Village, the mainland, Eagle Island, the Palace Gates, the dungeon and Death Adder's palace. Each location is packed with tough enemies. Only the best fighters will survive till the end.

The graphics in the SMS version of *Golden Axe* are colorful and detailed, but, of course, cannot rival those of the Genesis. The music and sound effects are adequate, but not memorable. As with many SMS games, the controls seem sluggish, sometimes making it difficult to quickly position your on-screen warrior. The more action on the screen, the tougher it is to maneuver.

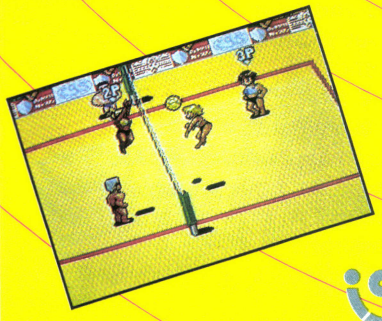
Golden Axe is obviously Sega's attempt to compete with *Double Dragon*. The scenario may differ, but the general concept is the same, right down to the blinking arrows that signify the end of a battle sequence. For my tastes, *Double Dragon* is a more interesting game, since you can

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steal weapons—knives, grenades, chains, etc.—from your opponents. Still, even if it's not as playable as *Double Dragon*, *Golden Axe* offers plenty of thrills and spills.

Any Sega SMS owner looking for a *Double Dragon*-type game could do much worse than *Golden Axe*, a quest that'll keep most any axe-wielding barbarian grinning.

—C. W.

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(415) 742-9300.

Ultima IV: Quest of the Avatar

SEGA

For the Sega Master System ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

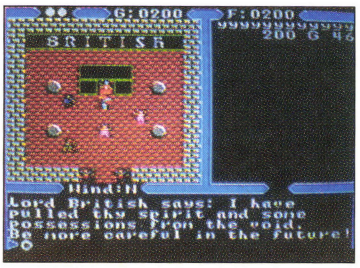
Translations of computer games to home video systems are usually marginally successful, as evidenced by *Ultima Exodus* for the NES. As a fan of the original computer *Ultima* series, I was doubly disappointed with *UE*—and even more skeptical when I unwrapped *Ultima IV: Quest of the Avatar* for the Sega Master System. Knowing *Ultima IV* to be a much more complex and rich computer role-playing game than *Ultima III* (the basis for *UE*), I doubted the SMS could do justice to its captivating forerunner.

So much for preconceptions. *Ultima IV* is as good as the computer version, perhaps even superior in a few considerations. It takes place in the same land of Britannia, there are hundreds of characters to talk to, thousands of monsters to be fought and a huge, complex universe that will take players weeks to explore. For those unfamiliar with the computer game, this is a total role-playing experience: Menus, statistics and maps make up the whole game. There are no arcade sequences; no fast-action joystick jockeying required.

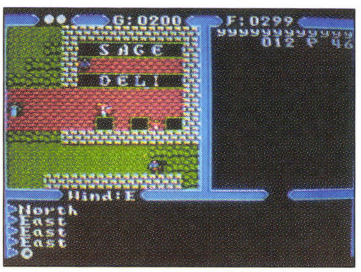
The beautifully illustrated, intelligently written prologue instantly tells you you're playing a particularly classy cart. You choose your name and gender and are presented with a series of seven questions. There are no right or wrong answers; the questions change depending upon your responses. When you complete the sequence, the game chooses one of eight professions for you.

You're dropped into Britannia with nothing but your hands as weapons and your skin as armor. Your quest is to become an Avatar and view the Codex of Ultimate Wisdom. Being an Avatar means seeking and achieving ultimate inner enlightenment and mastering each of eight virtues by meditating at shrines and doing nice things. Once you've achieved Avatarhood, you may descend into the Abyss and view the well-guarded Codex.









Sega's translation of *Ultima IV: Quest of the Avatar* for the Master System does justice to the original, and is in some cases superior.

Fortunately, you're not in this alone. You'll be joined by seven other characters, one of each profession. Only by exploiting each character's special talents can you reach the Codex. Also, you won't know who's going to join you; one of the menu choices during conversations is to request that the person you're talking to join your expedition.

The menu system is a model of clarity and ease. You can attack, ready a weapon or armor, use equipment or items, cast spells, camp and more. The talk menu is especially easy to use: It changes in context with the conversation (making the game easier to play than the computer version). For example, if a character happens to mention a particular interest, that interest will suddenly appear on the menu...clearly indicating that it may be an important topic to discuss further.

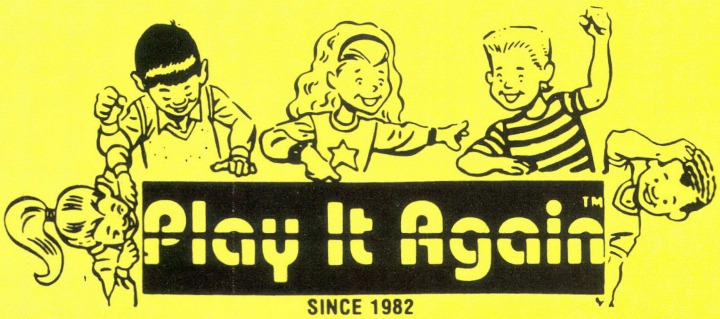
There are numerous multilevel dungeons that are tough to map but interestingly detailed. In addition to the dungeons, it's necessary to map the land above as well. The magic system in use is a complex arrangement of herbs and "reagents" that must be mixed correctly to create a stockpile of spells.

There's no first-person view as in *Phantasy Star* (also for the SMS, and equally wonderful). Overall, the graphics are quite good, though smaller and not as impressive as *Phantasy Star*'s. In some cases, the use of color is superior to the computer incarnation. Music and sound effects are present throughout the game and vary from pleasant to annoying.

This is a game that *Phantasy Star* lovers will appreciate greatly. It's only the second pure CRPG to appear for the SMS. It's a marvelous game, and this 4-Meg cart (with battery backup for saving games) preserves it in its entirety.

—Joshua Mandel

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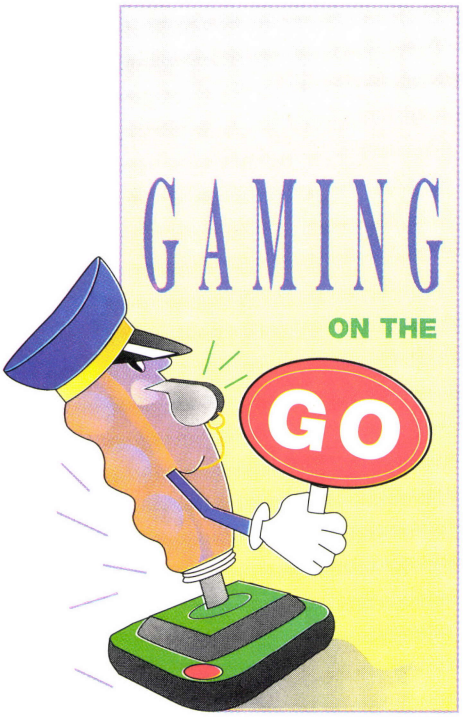
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CIRCLE #126 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



Game Boy Grab Bag

by MAURICE MOLYNEAUX

One of the biggest pleasures of writing a column for a video-gaming magazine is that you often get to play with new games long before they ever reach the market. Months before the game is "new" in the store, we have already played it to death and are on to the next thing.

One of the biggest pains of writing columns for a video-gaming magazine is that you usually get these new games with little or no documentation. For example, I have 12 new cartridges for the Game Boy here on my desk and instructions for only four. I have to guess my way through the bulk of them and try to figure out if I'm doing the right thing or if I'm killing myself pursuing the wrong aspect of the game.

Why no instructions? Simple, these games are prerelease versions. In many cases, the games are still being fine-tuned and adjusted at the time I receive them. This fact is fairly obvious just by glancing at the game cards, which come in bland, gray prototype cartridge cases complete with exposed electronic components jutting from them! No real instruction manuals have been written because the game is still subject to change.

So, keeping in mind the incomplete nature of these games, let's take a look at some of them.

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

Konami

No need to explain who these heroes in a half shell are. If you've somehow missed the original comic books, the TV series, toys, more comics books *and* the movie—well, you've clearly been comatose for the past few years.

Your mission, as one of the famed Turtles, is to save your reporter friend, April. You do so by fighting your way through hoards of Foot Clan baddies on the streets and in the sewers. There are five stages, and you can select any one of the four Turtles as your on-screen persona. Each Turtle uses a different primary weapon and has his own individual strengths and weaknesses. The controls are simple enough: Pressing the (selectable) attack button will usually make your Turtle strike out with his primary weapon. But, if that action occurs during a leap or while ducking, the Turtle will instead kick or fling a throwing star. As far as defense, the Turtles can duck and jump, avoiding obstacles and enemies that cannot be struck down.

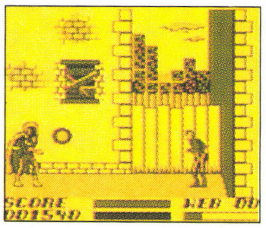
Unlike the NES version, where all four Turtles are employed more or less simultaneously and you can switch between them at will, this version appears to treat each Turtle like a "life." When the current Turtle's life meter runs out, he is "captured," and you must select another turtle to continue (if any remain). Thus, the trick seems to be to figure out which Turtle works best on what level and pick accordingly. If you find Donatello works best on the first two levels, while Michelangelo works best on Levels 2 through 4, use them in that order. When all four turtles have been captured, the game ends. It's important to keep your eyes out for the pizza it takes to boost the Turtles' life levels, otherwise it's Turtle-soup time!

The game features fairly good graphics. The turtles are recognizable and the enemies well-drawn. There are also some nice graphic touches. If you press the attack button and there's a parking meter in front of you, the meter gets slashed in two and the top part goes flying. *Cowabunga*!

The Amazing Spiderman

LJN

A good adaptation of the famous Marvel Comics character. Spiderman's mission is to rescue Mary Jane (gee, a damsel in distress, what an original concept!) from a gaggle of costumed supervillains and their thugs. The game's playfields scroll horizontally and/or vertically, allowing Spiderman to follow the trail to Mary Jane through streets and alleys, over rooftops and up the walls of buildings.



LJN's *The Amazing Spiderman* is a good adaptation of the famous Marvel Comics character.

Spidey has a number of weapons and defenses at his disposal, ranging from simple ducking, jumping and fisticuff moves to midair kicks, web blasts and the famous webs themselves, which allow our hero to swing over danger. In other phases, the famed "spider sense" comes into play. When Spidey climbs the walls of a tenement, the flashing of his spider sense warns the player that danger is on the way in the form of falling objects or whatnot, and Spidey must scurry out of the way or get clobbered.

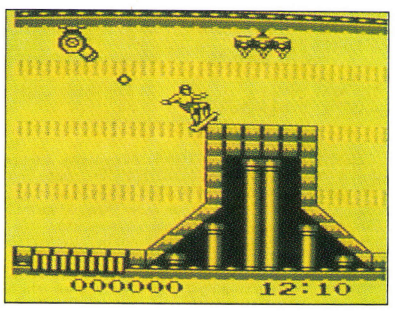
The game has good graphics, recognizable characters and openings to each phase that look like comic book panels, depicting the "boss" villain and Spiderman exchanging insults. My favorite graphics, however, are the title screens, which sort of ripple down the screen. Nice effect.

Skate or Die

Konami

Subtitled "Bad 'n' Rad," this game is an adaptation of Electronic Arts' computer game of the same name. The player controls a skateboarder who must jump, duck and otherwise avoid obstacles such as rolling barrels, falling flowerpots, dogs and psychopathic skateboarders while attempting to complete each phase before time runs out. The graphics are fair, but not spectacular, and the game play is good, but not exceptional or particularly clever.

Although this doesn't look at all like a bad game, it isn't really to my taste. Maybe it's



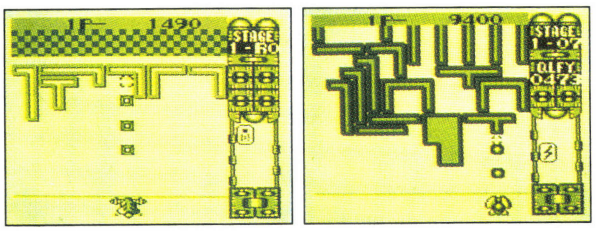
If you enjoy skateboarding contests, you'll like Konami's translation of EA's computer game *Skate or Die* for the Game Boy.

my bruised childhood attempts at skateboarding that are coloring my opinion, but I've never much liked skateboarding contests on computers or video games. Some sports just don't translate well. But, if you enjoy skateboarding contests in general or the idea of a sort of *Death Race 2000* on skateboards appeals to you, then *Skate or Die* is probably right up your alley.

Quarth

Konami

Picture if you will a kind of inverted half-breed between *Tetris* and *Arkanoid*, and you might get an idea of what *Quarth* is. The game is an action/strategy contest that calls for quick thinking and fast reflexes. In the game, you control what I'll call a "shooter" that moves back and forth across the bottom of the screen. Descending from above are groups of geometric objects, some T-shaped, others L-shaped, some like an inverted-U or even a mere dash. If any part of one of these objects crosses into your shooter's zone, the game ends. The trick is to get rid of the objects, not by destroying them with your shots, but by *filling* them with your shots. Every time one of your shots hits one of the objects, it adds to it. You must fill out the shape until it is a perfect rectangle, at which point it will disintegrate.



Puzzle games are hot right now and the best genre for Game Boy, a fact that Konami is banking on with *Quarth*.

As the shapes start falling faster and faster and become more and more devilishly entangled and overlap each other, it becomes harder and harder to keep up. Even worse, one wrong shot can make a descending shape even bigger than before, forcing you to waste more precious time trying to get rid of it while all around more and more of the shapes creep inexorably down the screen.

Fortunately, there are special "helper" objects you can collect. Whenever you succeed in eliminating a very large object, a small icon appears and drifts into a bank at screen left. Pressing the "B" button activates such items, which can help in ways from destroying descending objects to "stopping time" for a few seconds so that you can quickly mop up the most dangerous objects while they remain frozen in space.

Quarth is a good game; one that should appeal to action/puzzle addicts and most everyone else.

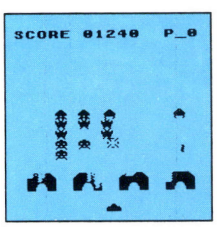
Space Invaders

Taito

When I first received this cartridge I had no idea what it was. Imagine my surprise when what should appear but the great granddaddy of all alien-invasion games, *Space Invaders*! Taito has faithfully translated this first megahit video game into a Game Boy version that perfectly duplicates the arcade original. The movements, graphics and sound effects are exact duplications. It's like taking a time travel trip back to the late '70s (as if any of us really wanted to).

For the three of you out there who've never seen *Space Invaders*, it works similarly to games like *Galaga*, where the player controls a vessel that can move left and right at the screen bottom, firing on ranks of bad-tempered alien intruders. The player shoots at the creatures, who in turn drop bombs at the player. The game ends when the player either loses all of his "fire bases" or an alien reaches the screen bottom and "lands" on Earth.

Space Invaders was a good game in its day, and in many ways it is *still* a good game. However, it's long since been outclassed by other games like *Galaga*, *SolarStriker* and a host of others. The invaders in this classic game are stupid, marching mindlessly back and forth, back and forth, taking no evasive action. *Space Invaders* is a classic alright, but I doubt that modern audiences will be satisfied with its simple graphics and overly repetitive game play.



Taito is counting on the veteran gamers to fondly recall the old days of video-gaming and the incredible popularity that *Space Invaders* had in the arcades as they unleash a Game Boy version.

Nemesis

Ultra Games

This horizontally scrolling shoot-'em-up with solid graphics, good game play and a high addictiveness factor is a winner. Forget the manual's excuse for a "plot," just fly your ship through the many scrolling playfields, blast enemies, duck obstacles, pick up bonus capsules and try to make your way to the evil King Nemesis, the "alien crime master."

There's not much else to say. Good play, decent sound and great graphics are the high points in this portable version of *Gradius*. In addition to the flying enemies, there are walking machines and stationary weapons. Furthermore, there are detailed playfields littered with scenery like Easter island stone heads, dinosaur bones and more. There are even multilevel details scrolling on some horizons. If you like blast-'em games, this one's a safe bet.

CosmoTank

Asuka

I received two different versions of this game. The first was practically incomprehensible—because I don't read Japanese! Fortunately, I received a second version of the game with English text. In *CosmoTank* you are the commander/driver of a futuristic tank maneuvering around on what appears to be a lunar surface. Aliens attack from many directions to impede your progress as you search for friendly bases (to replenish shields, get orders, etc.).Your trek takes you through caves and craters that will lead you into enemy-occupied subterranean labyrinths. There you must destroy various devices and defenses as you attempt to reach your goal. Just what that goal *is* remains a mystery to me because I didn't have any instructions. The game begins with instructions to "destroy the life cores of each planet," whatever that means.

Your tank can maneuver and fire in any of eight directions. Shields will only take so much punishment before your tank is destroyed. The game features a catchy little tune that is surprisingly easy to put up with compared to most. It seems to take a little bit off the edge of fighting the buglike aliens who assail you from all sides.

The game has three modes: quest (the mission); practice, in which you can test your shooting skill against the baddies of various levels; and versus mode, which lets you use the VideoLink cable for a two-player contest.

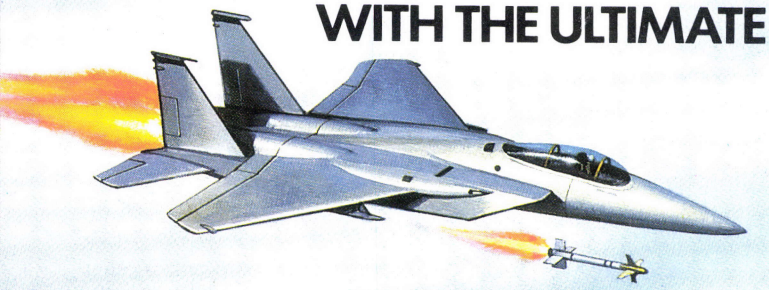
The game's graphics are good, with aliens and terrain rendered clearly. Most notable are the small pictures of the people who give you orders or report status. They are rendered in Japanese cartoon-character style. I'm not particularly fond of that style in most places, but here it seems appropriate. Unfortunately, the American version of the game features modified graphics, and one of the faces looked better in the original version. Pity.

That's seven out of twelve. I'll save the other five for another time. Next issue we go from Game Boy to Lynx as we take an in-depth look at the first games available for that machine, including the stunning air combat of *Blue Lightning* and the quirky puzzles of *Chip's Challenge*.

Gotta go! So many games, so little time!

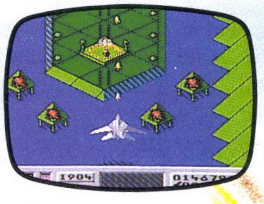
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MB MILTON BRADLEY

No Games Hit Harder.

CIRCLE #127 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Tips are graded on a scale of one to five joysticks. The more joysticks colored in, the more valuable the hint!

Hey, gamers! We're looking for all sorts of secrets that you've discovered in your games, and we're willing to pay for them. If you've found continues, special modes or sound tests that you want to pass along, send them to VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210; Attn: *Easter Egg Hunt*. The author of each new tip we use will receive $10. Write neatly, and be sure to include your name and address!

EASTER EGG HUNT

Here's a key to the abbreviations:

U = Up

D = Down

L = Left

R = Right

A = "A" button

B = "B" button

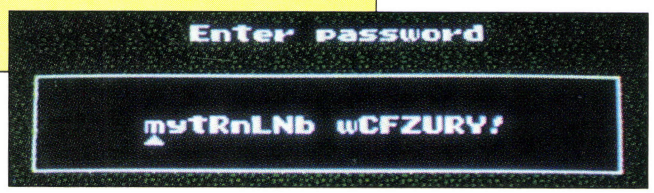
C= "C" button

Bad News Baseball

(TECMO FOR THE NES)

Input this code for the championship game where Texas goes up against the Bluejays:

mytRnLNb wCFZURY!



Iron Tank

(SNK FOR THE NES)

In a previous issue we printed a code that would take you deep into enemy territory. Here's a code, sent in by Lee Venteicher of Sheldon, Iowa, that takes you even farther:

7069664



World Championship Wrestling

(FCI FOR THE NES)

For those of you who are frustrated with this great wrestling game, here are two codes that should help. The first code is -XY- GBG1 R9DQ, which will make you Road Warrior Animal with a 11-0 record. You'll have to beat Ricky "the Dragon" Steamboat and Nature Boy Ric Flair to earn the W.C.W minor title.

The next password is: N5Y1 1BP7 RZNT. You're Road Warrior Animal again, this time with a 20-0 record. You'll have to beat the same two wrestlers before going against the Master.

Thanks to Roger Carrillo of Huntington Park, California, who forwarded these two codes.





continued on page 60

Mean Streets

Mean Streets is truly an advanced interactive adventure experience.

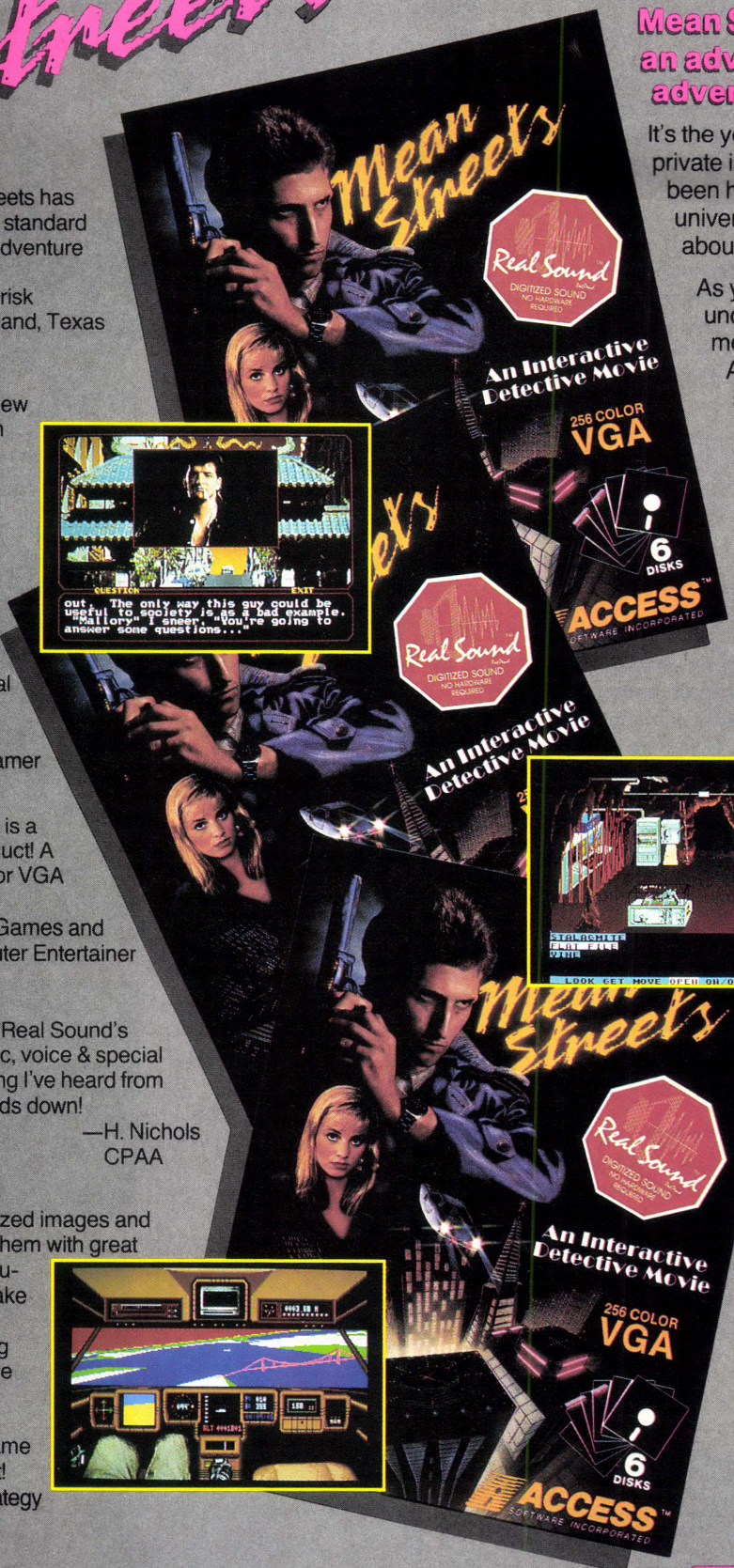
It's the year 2033. Your name is Tex Murphy, private investigator in San Francisco. You've been hired by the beautiful daughter of a university professor to uncover the facts about her father's death.

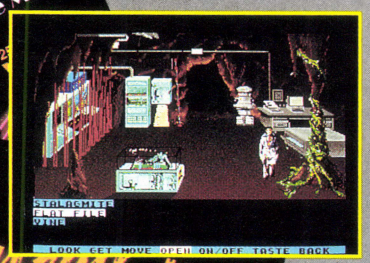
As you begin your investigation, you uncover the deaths of several prominent members of the scientific community. Are these deaths coincidental, or is something more sinister going on?

- You will interact with more than 27 characters which animate and respond to questions, bribes and threats.
- Some characters actually talk. This spectacular effect is achieved by synchronizing digitized animation with *Real Sound* ™.
- You'll crack high-tech security systems.
- You'll rummage through offices, warehouses, and factories as you search for vital clues.
- You'll risk your life in action-packed shootouts.

Mean Streets features *Real Sound* ™, our own proprietary technology that allows MS-DOS computers to play high quality digitized sound effects, music and speech WITHOUT HARDWARE.

ACTUAL 256 COLOR VGA SCREENS





Mean Streets has set a new standard for interactive adventure games!
—R. A. Frisk
Sugarland, Texas

Beautiful! A new step ahead in computer entertainment.
—M. A. Platnick
Bluefield, WV

Mean Streets is a major technical breakthrough for the I.B.M.
—Electronic Gamer

Mean Streets is a dazzling product! A showpiece game for VGA machines.
—Video Games and Computer Entertainer

Mean Streets' Real Sound's quality of music, voice & special effects beats anything I've heard from my "Ad Lib"™...hands down!
—H. Nichols
CPAA

Animating digitized images and synchronizing them with great voice and sound simulation for IBM P.C. make Mean Streets more realistic than anything you may already have experienced. To call Mean Streets just another computer game is an understatement!
—Game Player's Strategy

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ACCESS SOFTWARE INCORPORATED

CIRCLE #128 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

continued from page 58

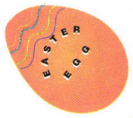
Moto Roader

(NEC FOR THE TURBOGRAFX-16)



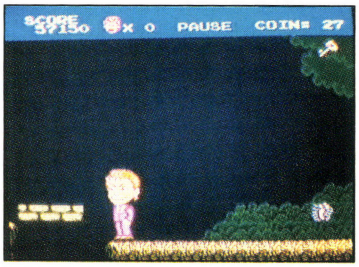
We received this Easter egg from Brandon Rose of Englewood, New Jersey. To obtain $50,000, before picking your track, push and hold **SELECT** and then press the No. 2 button. If the word "RICH" appears on the screen, you've done the trick correctly.







If you want to see how fast you can make it around the track and/or change the track's surface, before selecting your track push and hold **SELECT** and then press R and/or L for the one you want. This brings up the selection mode (right=TIME, left=SLIP). Thanks to Mike Bruketta of Oxnard, California, for that one.



J.J. and Jeff

(NEC FOR THE TG-16)

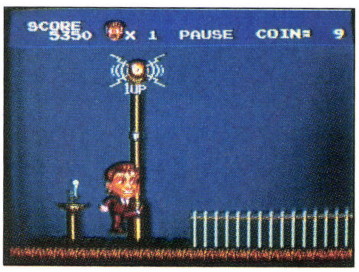


If you're having trouble with this game or if you want to get to the last level quickly, here are some warps you can use. The first one can be found in Round 1-4, and it will take you to Rounds 2, 3 and 4. The second one can be found in Round 3-3 and will take you directly to Round 6-4. For each of these warps, which are displayed in the accompanying pictures, you have to jump atop the vermin to get to the special ledge. Once you're on the ledge, jump straight up.

You can also get a 1-Up by kicking the lamppost, provided you run for at least five block lengths, then jump while kicking. It takes some timing and practice to hit the post perfectly.













Burai Fighter

(TAXAN FOR THE NES)



Here are codes for the last rounds for Eagle, Albatross and Ace:

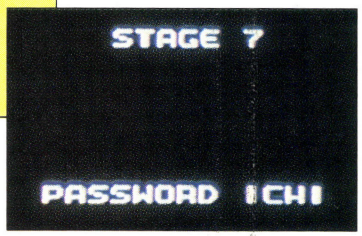
Eagle Round 7—GAME
Albatross Round 7—NILE
Ace Round 7—IDOL

To play the secret level, Ultimate, input these passwords:

Round 1—GOOD
Round 7—ICHI







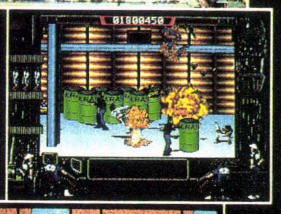


continued on page 62

CRIME WAVE











ACTUAL 256 COLOR VGA SCREENS

Real Sound™

A powerful crime syndicate has taken over large areas of our major cities turning them into vast criminal wastelands.

Arson, extortion, drug distribution, murder and now...terrorist abduction! You have just learned that they have taken the U.S. President's daughter and are holding her and our country hostage.

YOU'VE HAD A GUT-FULL! . . . **YOUR PURPOSE:** To wipe out this criminal organization and rescue the president's daughter. Even with the most sophisticated Assault Technology available, it won't be easy. You are the only one that can save the country from this sinister infestation . . .

Bring arcade action home like never before!

Crime Wave, with *Real Sound*™ and 256 color digitized VGA graphics, puts you on the streets for real!

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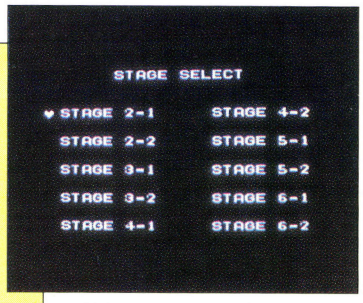
CIRCLE #129 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

continued from page 60

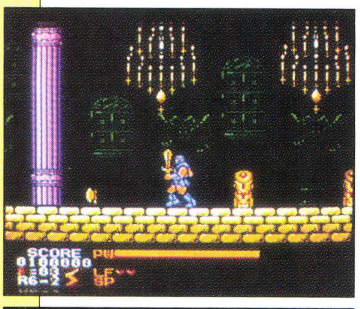
Astyanax

(JALECO FOR THE NES)

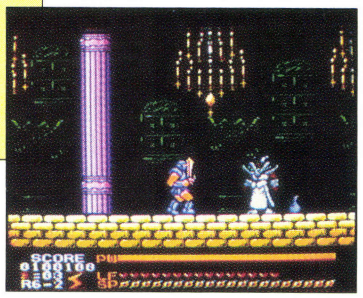
To bring up the level select in this game, during the title screen press U, D, L, R, B, B, B, B. The level-select menu will appear, allowing you to select from Levels 2 through 6.



Here's a code that will make you invincible to the enemies and their shots. During the title screen press U, U, U, U, D, L, R, U. Even though the enemies can't harm you, you can still lose a life if you fall from cliffs or ledges and leave the screen.

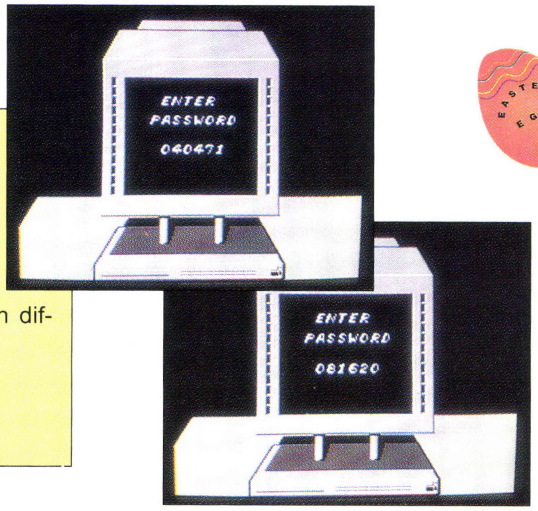


If you can't seem to beat the last boss, Blackhorn, but you don't want to use the invincibility, you might want to attempt this pattern of attack. Before you reach Blackhorn in his human form, go back to the left and increase your weapon strength. There is also a statue that contains a blue potion—since you receive full life before actually battling Blackhorn, you want to save this item. As you fight Blackhorn, move to the left, continuing until you are on the left side of the aforementioned statue. Strike the statue to reveal the potion, but *don't* take it yet. (Don't use magic either.) First fight and defeat Blackhorn in human form; after that battle you'll scroll to the right, and as you scroll, you'll walk over the potion giving you full life to engage Blackhorn in his demon form.



Code Name: Viper

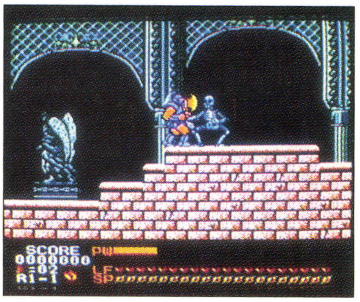
(CAPCOM FOR THE NES)





Input these codes to start in different rounds of the game:

Round 3: 040471
Round 6: 081620



Cybernoid

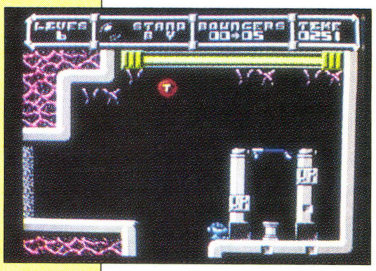
(ACCLAIM FOR THE NES)



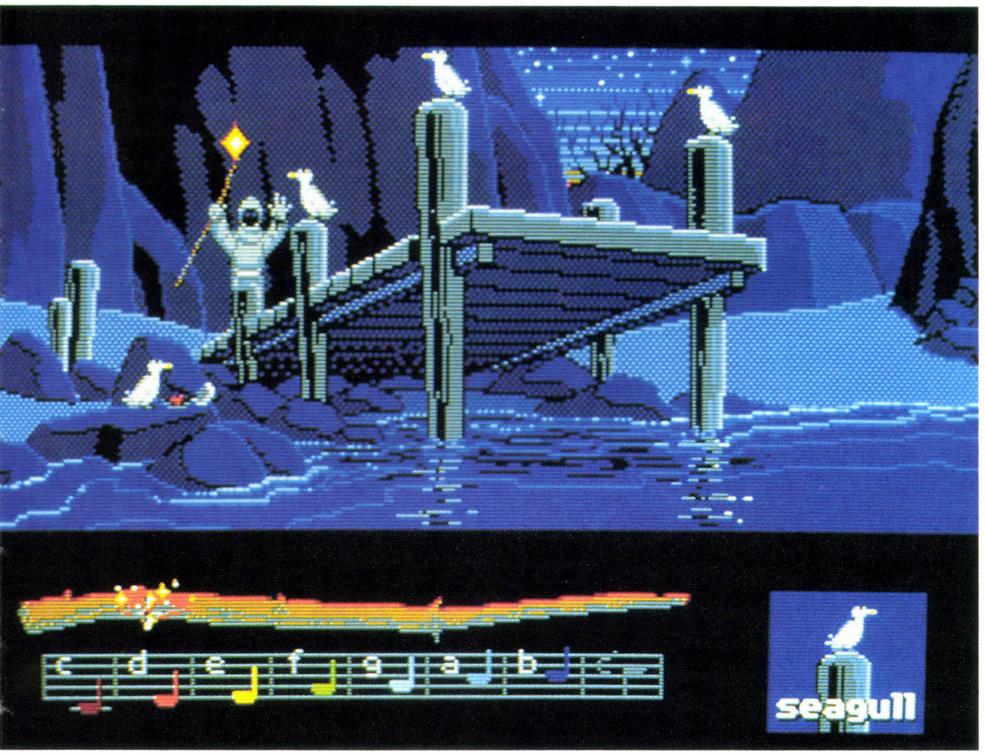
If you shoot the Jesters (that face to the left) in their heads until a star appears, it's worth 5,000 points.

When you reach the big guns, shoot the base until a balloon inflates out of the barrel. Catch the balloon for a 1-Up.

If you're on the lift to another level and you lose all your bouncers, try shooting the slides in the lift located on the bottom left-hand side. After these shots a "T" icon should appear. This icon stands for transform, and it will give you five shields, full weapons, hyper-fast mace and a permanent shield for six screens.



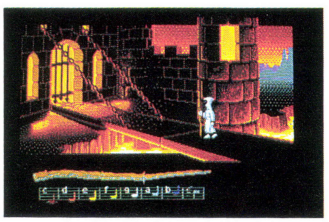
continued on page 64



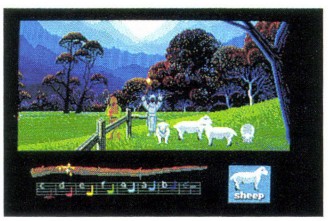
The game is fantasy. The interface is magic.

Alone on a craggy hilltop, high above an island shrouded in perpetual mist, your quest begins. But tread gingerly, because while the world of *Loom*™ is breathtakingly beautiful, unspeakable danger awaits the unsuspecting.

Trepidation soon gives way to bravado as you peek inside abandoned tents in the village. Stumbling over a discarded weaver's distaff, you watch in wonder as it gradually glows and resonates with a sequence of musical notes. Tentatively at first, you point the staff and repeat the notes. After considerable experimentation, you may discover the power to see in the dark. Or weave straw into gold. And eventually find the means to leave the island itself.



Not all the Guilds welcome strangers.



A spell weaver's power is not for the sheepish.

A fantastic odyssey ensues, as menacing waterspouts, merciless dragons and exotic cities draw you deeper and deeper into the fantasy. Armed with the distaff's magic power, you stride fearlessly across vast, cinematic landscapes. Seeking the arcane knowledge possessed by the Great Guilds, accumulated and refined since the dawn of time.

Typing is banished from this kingdom.

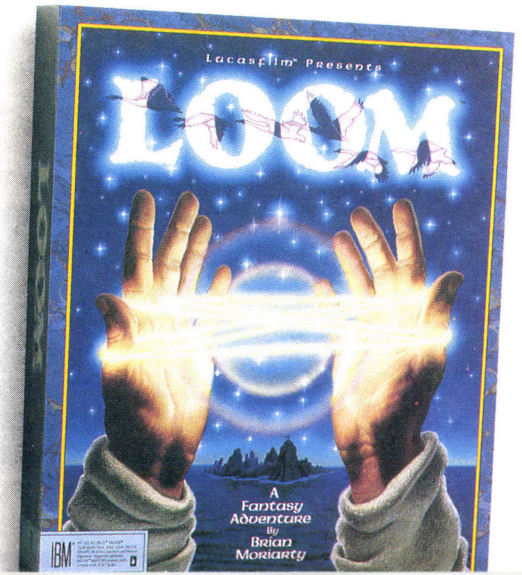
Loom is more than a masterpiece of fantasy storytelling. With *Loom,* Lucasfilm™ Games literally redefines the fantasy computer game experience. Simple point n' click actions move your character, select objects, and perform magic. No cumbersome keystrokes, text parsing, maze mapping, or inventory management intrude to break the spell.

We even transport you to the Age of the Great Guilds before you turn on the computer. With a lavishly produced, 30-minute drama on Dolby® Stereo audio cassette that's included with the game. Recorded by Lucasfilm's Academy Award-winning Sprocket Systems, it introduces the characters and sets the scene for the impending, epic struggle against imposing odds.

Then it's full immersion into *Loom*'s 3-Dimensional, scrolling panoramic landscape. Where detailed animation, high definition graphics, startling special effects and stirring musical score combine to create a total environment. Captivating you from the opening scene to the final climax.

And your quest for a truly magical fantasy adventure is finally realized.

LUCASFILM™ GAMES



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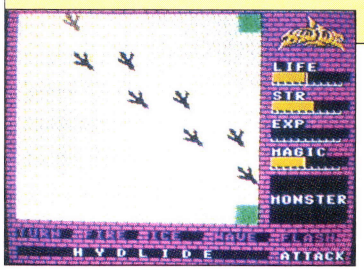
CIRCLE #130 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

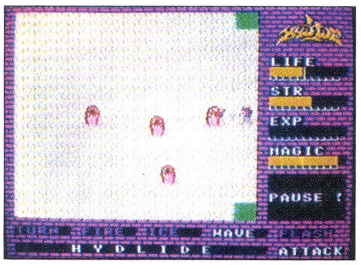
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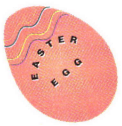
HYDLIDE

(FCI FOR THE NES)

To secure full magic power for a short time, you must shoot three sand worms with one shot of the Wave magic. When you see some mysterious feet walk across the sand, you'll know the trick worked.











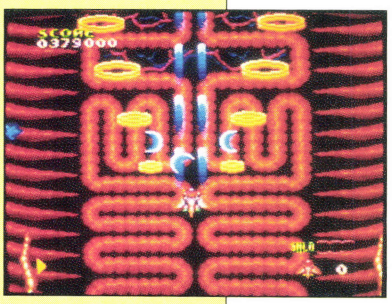
Vegas Dream

(HAL AMERICA FOR THE NES)

If you'd like to start with millions in your account, here's what you do: Simply switch the 17th and 18th characters of your password, and your available cash will instantly go up. Thanks to Joshua Miyagi of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, for sending in this Easter egg.

Cyber Core

(NEC FOR THE TG-16)



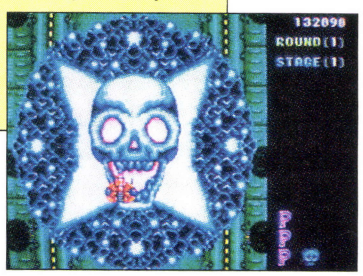
Here's a way to get the most powerful weapon, one that's not mentioned in the manual. To start, pick up the metamorphosis items in this order: red, blue, green, green, yellow, red. If you haven't sustained damage while retrieving these items, you'll end up with full shields. Once you've lost all of your shields, you'll obtain a weapon that is a combination of all four insect types. For the trick to work, you can't pick up anymore metamorphosis items. You can, however, pick up the shield item and the invincibility item without affecting the trick.



TRUXTON

(SEGA FOR THE GENESIS)

This Easter egg will help you get by the boss of each round. (Be sure you have at least one bomb left when you encounter the bosses of each round.) After releasing your ordnance when the screen has turned white (indicating an explosion), press **START** to pause. If you wait about 20 seconds then take the game off pause, you'll find the boss has been destroyed.

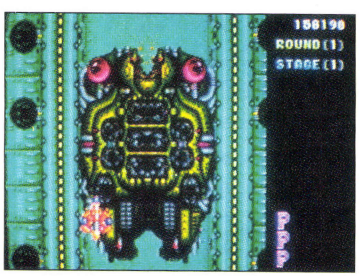


Phantasy Star II

(SEGA FOR THE GENESIS)

To play this great role-playing game in slow motion, simply press **START** to pause, then press and hold B. Thanks to Richard Dornaus of Whittier, California, for sending this one to us.





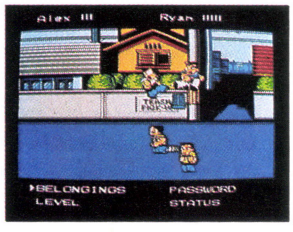
Technos!

Now with the hottest 2-player action anywhere!

River City Ransom.

It's you and your buddy versus the meanest, baddest drug lord in town. He's holding the entire high school hostage, and only the two of you can expel him.

You'll both go to battle against ghoulish gangs and depraved dropouts. Along the way, you'll gain extra power and strength. And you'll need all you can get. School's out forever, unless you answer the call!

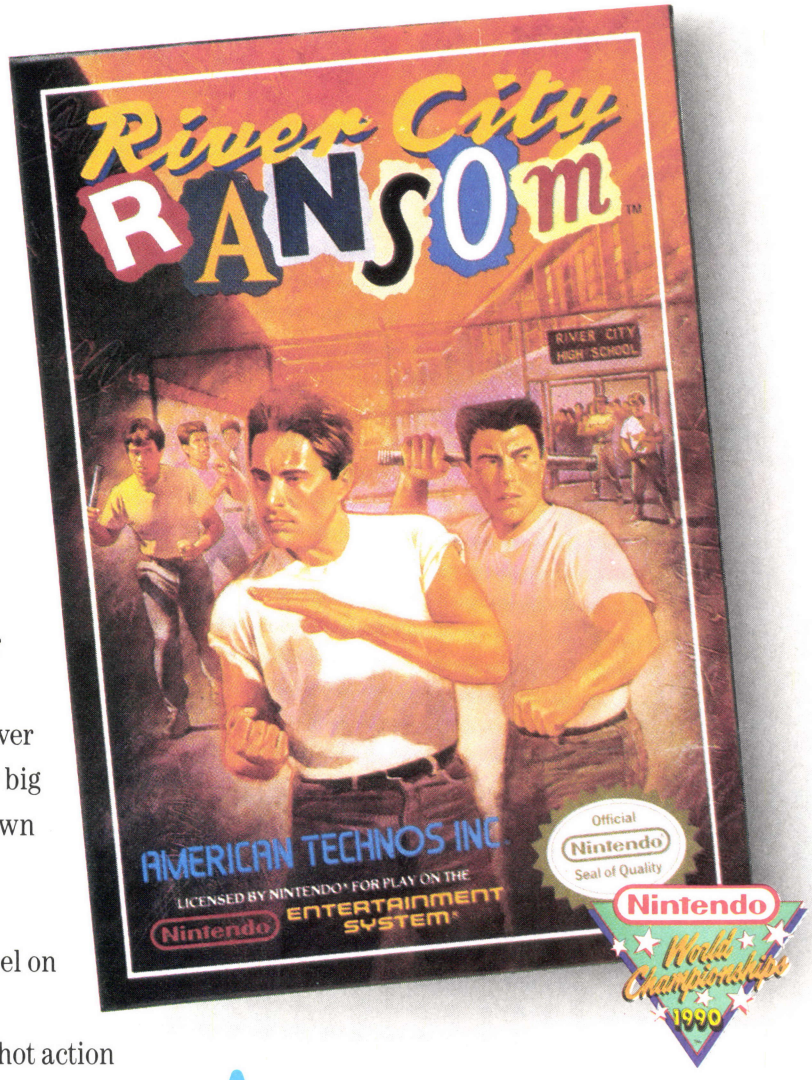






Hurry. Head over to your nearest video game store. Ask for River City Ransom. It's your big chance to be a hometown hero.

And look for the American Technos label on many other Nintendo games. We have more hot action coming your way.



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CIRCLE #131 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



WARNING: If you're already a Neutopia owner, we suggest you play it prior to reading the information presented here. Studying our maps prematurely may decrease your enjoyment of the game. However, if you have yet to purchase Neutopia, it should be safe to browse through this article in order to decide if the game is something you'd enjoy. It's unlikely you'll remember many of the clues once you do start to play.

Magic & Medallions

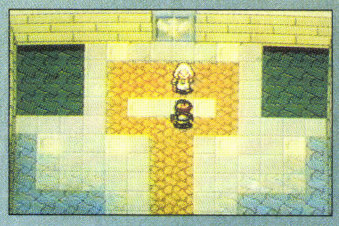
A PLAYER'S GUIDE TO NEUTOPIA

by Clayton Walnum

One of the best things about owning a "new generation" video-game machine is that you're able to see many old faves return in spectacular style. Such is the case with NEC's *Neutopia* for the TurboGrafx-16. *Neutopia* is virtually a clone of Nintendo's *The Legend of Zelda*. However, it takes advantage of the TurboGrafx's outstanding graphics and sound capabilities to make an even more engrossing game than the original.

This month, we'll take you on a tour of the first half of *Neutopia*. The following pages contain complete maps, as well as many photos depicting scenes and situations you'll experience as you play *Neutopia*. Next month we'll conclude this player's guide and give you even more tips and action pix. Lots more maps too! Stay tuned.

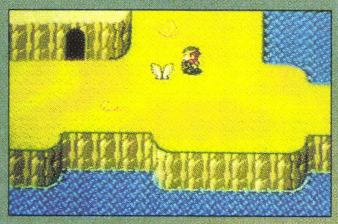

FOR THE
TurboGrafx-16
ILLUSTRATION BY PETER PALOMBI



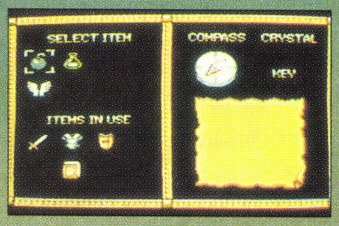
You start your adventure here. As you find the medallions, additional exits in this temple will become available.



At the onset of your quest, search everywhere for valuable items such as the Book of Revival.



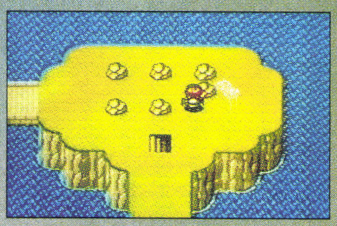
These wings allow you to fly back to the nearest temple.



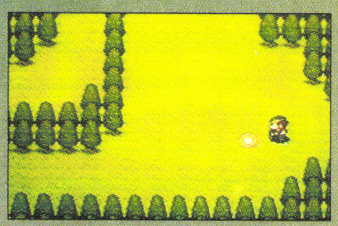
Use your compass when searching for the secret labyrinths. When you get close enough, the compass will point in the direction of the next labyrinth.



Many people throughout the lands possess important hints and information. Search them all out.



Some entrances can only be exposed by moving a special rock. Give every rock you find a shove. You never know what you might find.



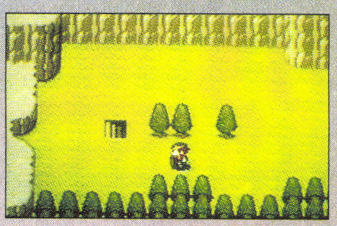
Some enemies leave coins behind. Take them. You'll need money in order to buy essential items, such as medicines and bombs.



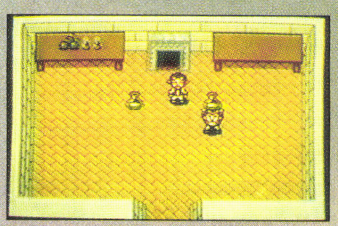
The cherries are a valuable prize due to their strange healing power.



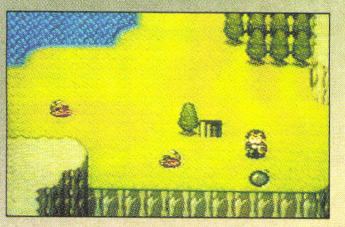
The fire wand is one of the most important items you'll find in the Sphere on the Land. With it you cannot only attack enemies, but you can also burn down trees, exposing secret passageways. Try to burn every tree you see.



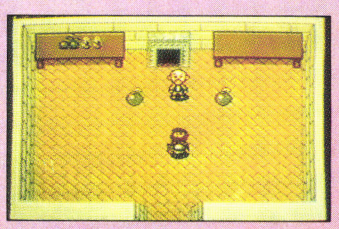
This entrance was exposed when the tree above it was burned away.



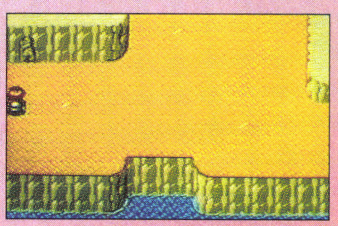
You can carry up to two bottles of medicine. Each bottle will heal you once. Unfortunately, they're expensive. Never enter a labyrinth without a full supply of medicine.



Bombs are sometimes left behind by defeated enemies. They can also be bought in special places.



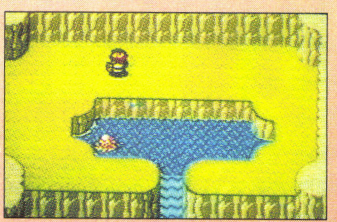
Here's a bomb shop. At first you can carry a maximum of only eight bombs. In the next level you'll be able to increase that to 12.



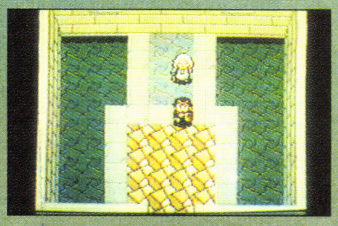
See the mural on the cliff? Behind some of the murals are secret caves. To expose the caves, blast the cliff with a bomb.



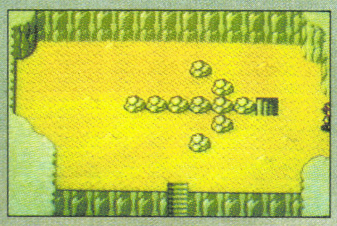
This fellow will increase your lifeline by one notch.



In some areas, like this secluded pool, when you destroy all the monsters, a secret stairway appears. Make sure you kill the octopus too.



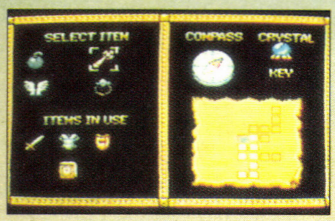
This young lady, and others like her throughout the game, will supply you with a password that allows you to restart the game from where you left off.



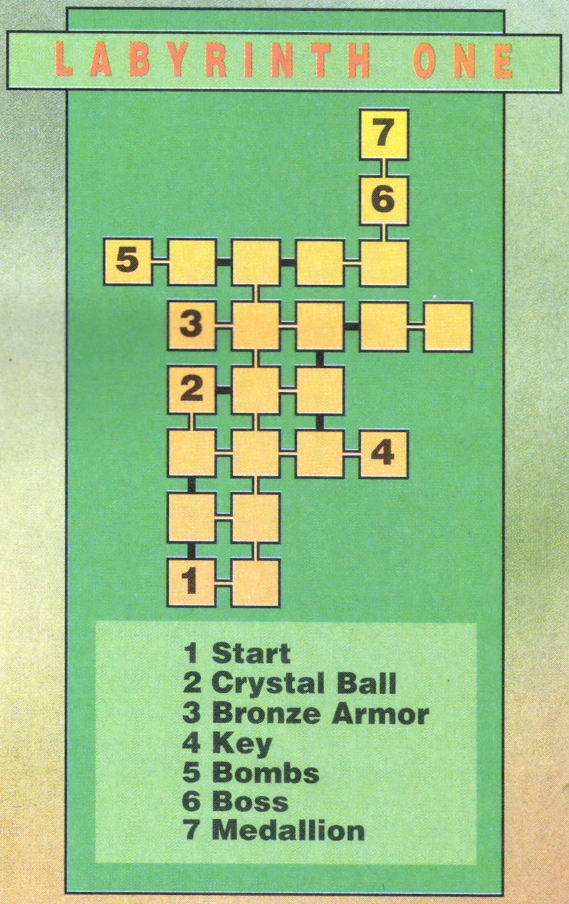
Visit this place to replenish your strength; then follow the arrow to locate the first labyrinth.



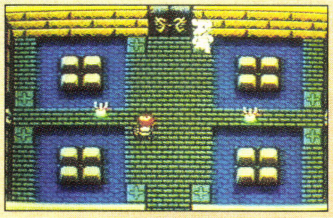
The entrance to the first labyrinth is anything but impenetrable.



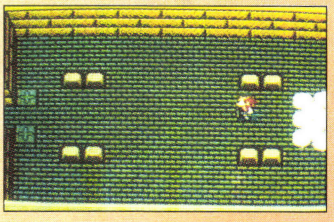
Once inside a labyrinth your map will keep track of rooms you've visited. When you find the labyrinth's crystal ball, the map will also display rooms you've yet to enter. Not all rooms are shown, so explore.



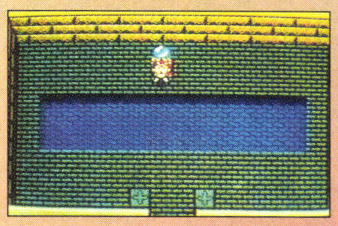
DIAGRAMS BY CATHERINE RUNDELL DUNN



The only way to open the doors in some rooms is to wipe out all the monsters.



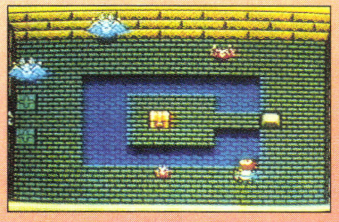
Use bombs in order to discover secret passages.



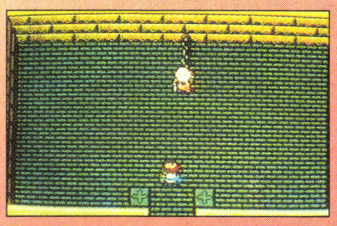
Here's the crystal ball, which will help fill in your map. Every labyrinth features its own crystal ball.



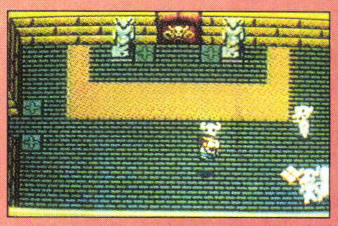
This treasure chest holds the bronze armor.



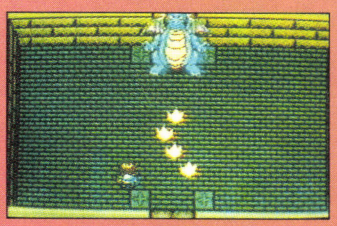
And this one contains the key to the crypt. It's in the crypt that you'll battle each labyrinth's boss monster. Without the key, you can't get in.



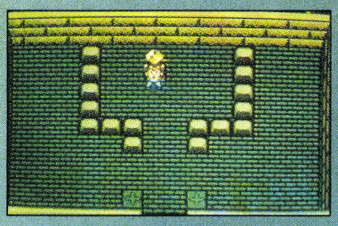
Prisoners confined in the labyrinth frequently have useful information.



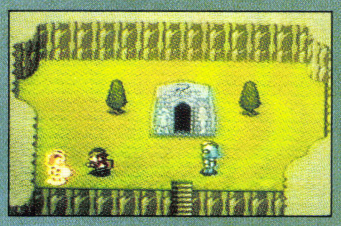
Here's the doorway to this labyrinth's crypt. Do you have the key?



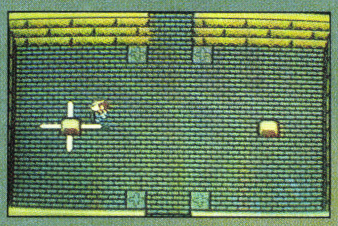
To beat the first boss, move in close when he stops firing and blast him.



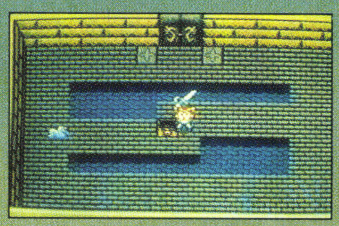
When he starts shooting his fireballs, beat it. After defeating the boss, the first medallion is yours!



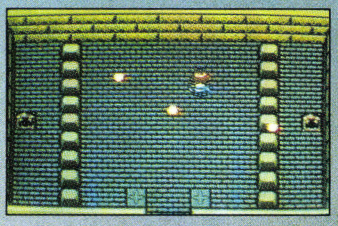
This is the entrance to the second labyrinth.



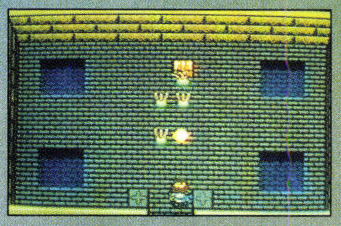
In the second labyrinth, watch out for the booby-trapped stones.



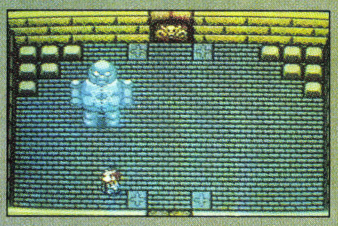
Here's the bronze sword!



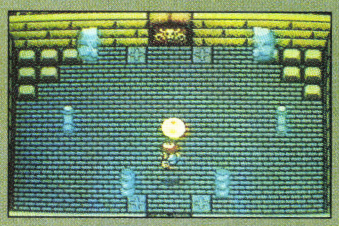
When in this room, keep moving. The gargoyles constantly shoot fireballs in your direction.



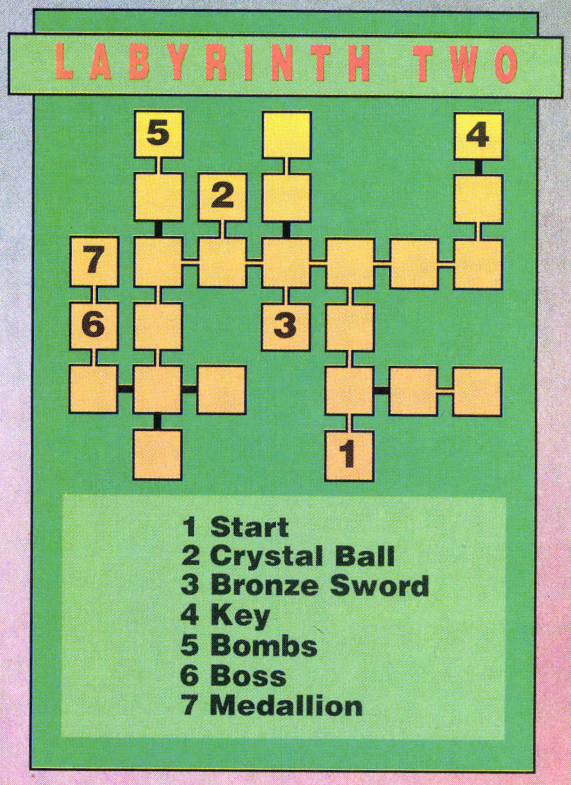
In some treasure chests you'll find a supply of bombs.

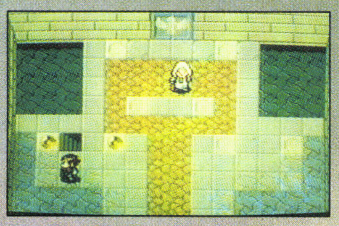


Here's the second boss. Stand directly in front of him...



...then, when he breaks into pieces, you'll have a clear shot at his atomic innards.





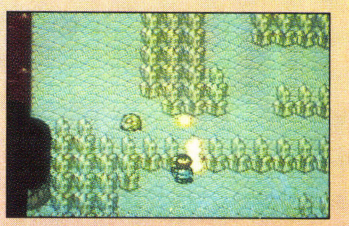
Now that two of the medallions have been brought to the temple, the entrance to the Sphere Under Ground is revealed. We're cooking now!



The Sphere Under Ground is a strange crystal-filled world.



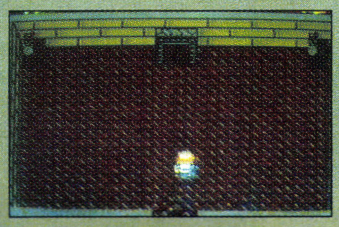
Everything isn't always what it seems to be here. For example, rocks sometimes spring to life.



Use your fire wand to burn crystals. Only a few are combustible, but make sure to try them all.



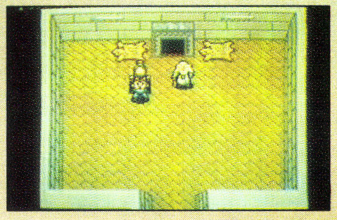
The furrows in the cliff walls may hide secret caves. Use bombs to blast them open.



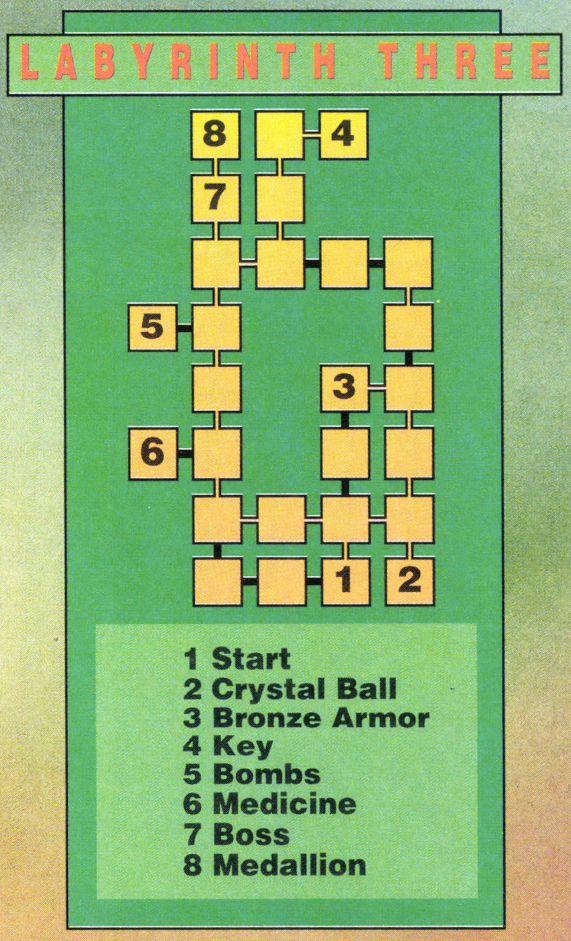
Nobody home in this dark room? Try entering the chimney.

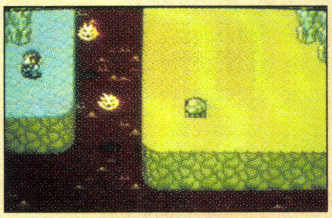


After burying away the crystals here, you'll find a secret entrance. At the bottom of the stairway lies...

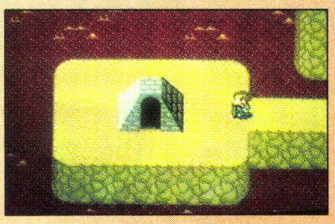


...a man who will give you the moonbeam moss.

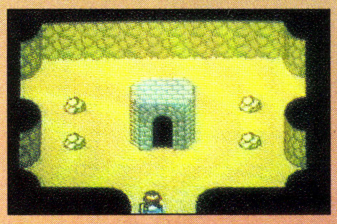




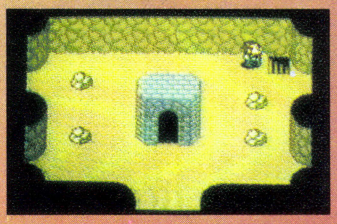
Fiery lava beds make negotiating this sphere's maze a frustrating undertaking.



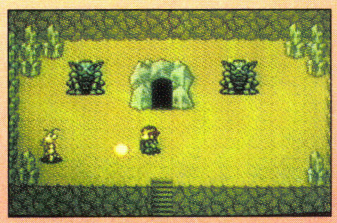
The man who owns the rainbow drop lives here. But he seems to have lost track of it.



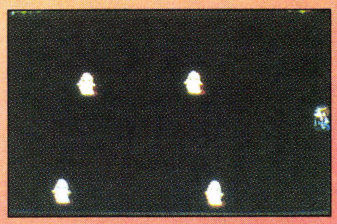
Use your moonbeam moss to illuminate this out-of-the-way area. The thief who stole the rainbow drop resides here.



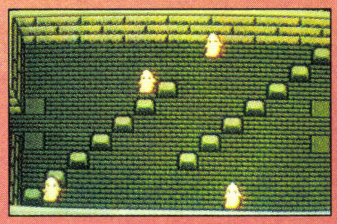
The rainbow drop is hidden in a secret room.



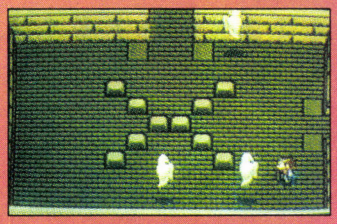
At last! The entrance to the third labyrinth.



When the labyrinth goes dark...

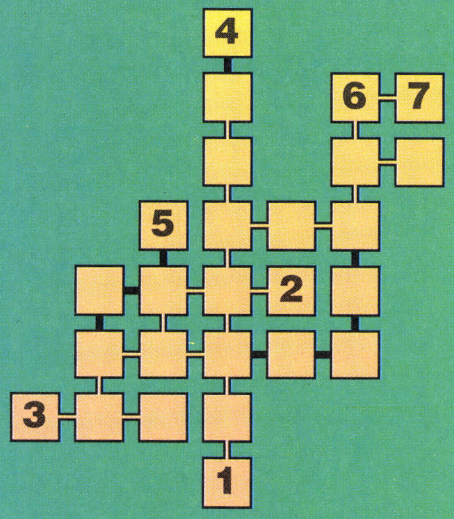


...use the moonbeam boss to lighten things up.

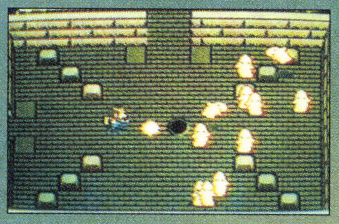


These ghosts blink on and off, making them formidable opponents. If you have a ring, use it to reduce them to less fearsome foes. By the way, your fire wand won't work against these apparitions. Use your sword.

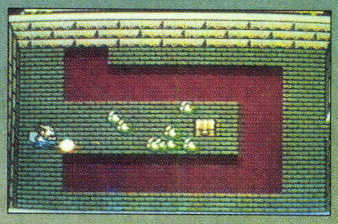
LABYRINTH FOUR



1 Start
2 Crystal Ball
3 Steel Armor
4 Key
5 Medicine
6 Boss
7 Medallion



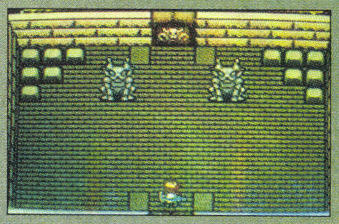
Destroy all of these ghosts but one. If you happen to kill the last ghost, another batch will emerge from the hole.



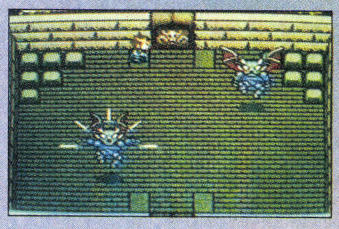
This carefully guarded chest retains the steel armor.



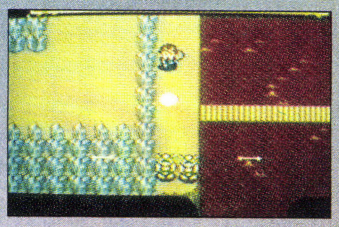
This prisoner watches over the bronze shield.



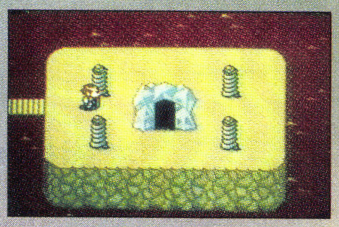
The bosses of the third labyrinth start out as statues, but...



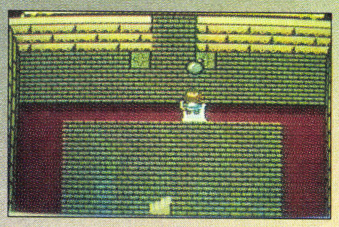
...quickly leap to the attack. When they fire at you, use your shield to deflect their arrows. When the coast is clear, give them a taste of your hero's blade.



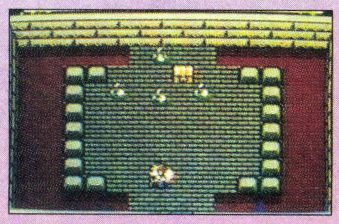
The route to the fourth labyrinth is windy and long.



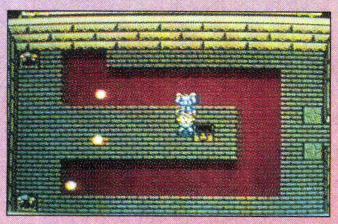
The entrance to the fourth labyrinth is completely unguarded.



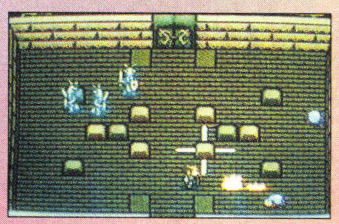
The rainbow drop lets you cross narrow water areas.



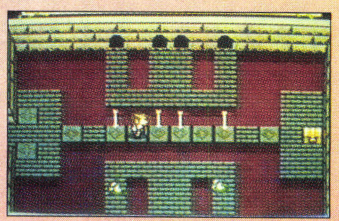
This treasure chest contains a free bottle of medicine for you to use.



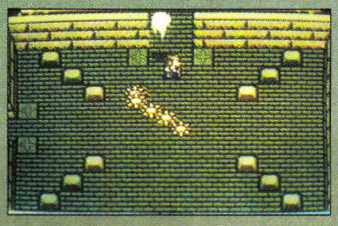
Hurray! It's the steel armor.



Many booby-trapped stones will be encountered in the fourth labyrinth.



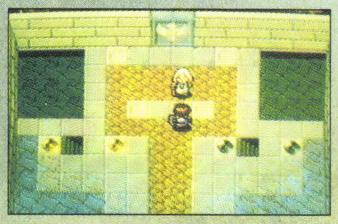
Although one end of this chainlike creature is attached to the center of the room, the other end will pursue you. Sometimes it takes tricky running to avoid its deadly touch.



Advance carefully in order to avoid getting hit by the arrows.

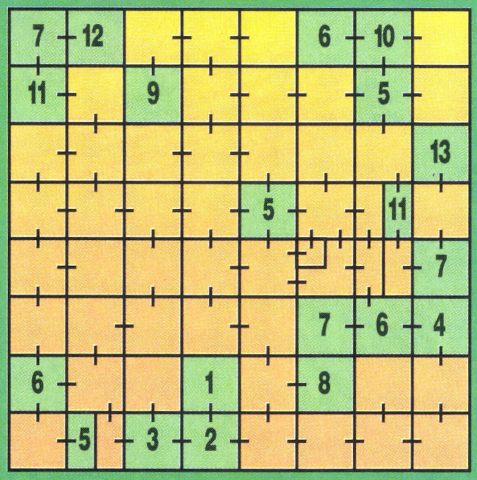


The fourth boss is a push-over to beat. Stand directly in front of him and keep swinging.



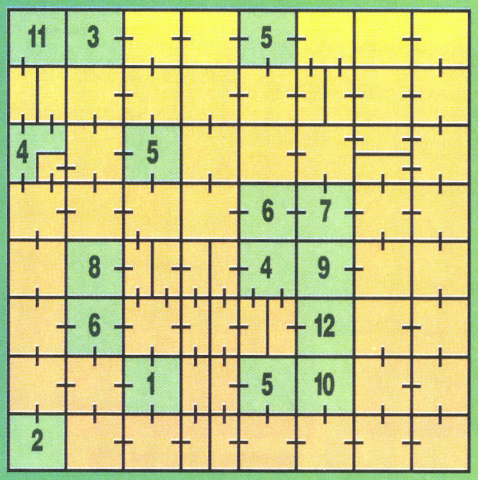
Now that four medallions have been replaced, a new entrance is revealed. Next month we'll see where the stairway leads.

AREA ONE: SPHERE ON THE LAND



1 Start
2 Book of Revival
3 Bombs & Medicine
4 Fire Wand
5 Medicine
6 Bombs
7 Healer
8 Gold
9 Life
10 Magic Ring
11 Password
12 Labyrinth 1
13 Labyrinth 2

AREA TWO: SPHERE UNDER GROUND



1 Start
2 Up Max Bombs
3 Moonbeam Moss
4 Password
5 Medicine
6 Bombs
7 Healer
8 Gold
9 Rainbow Drop Owner
10 Rainbow Drop
11 Labyrinth 3
12 Labyrinth 4

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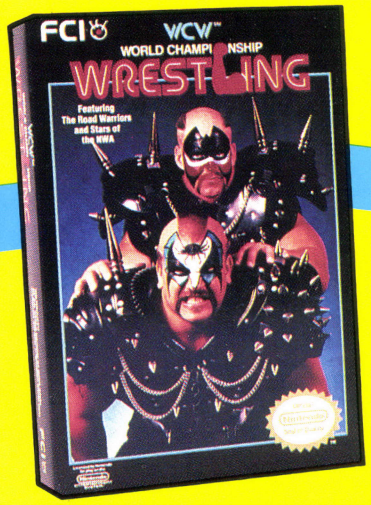
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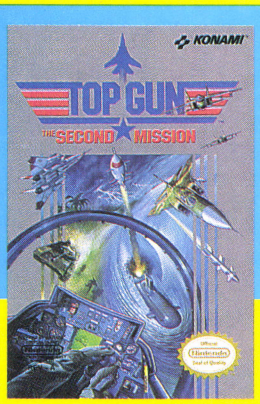


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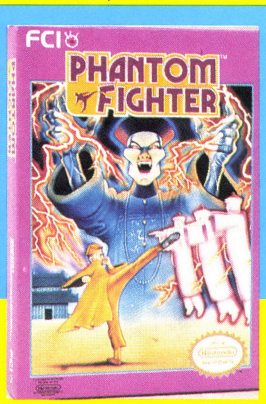
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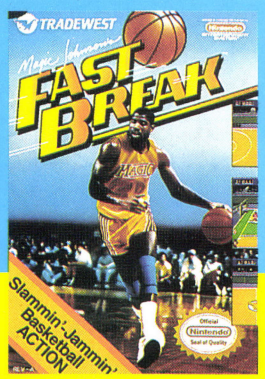
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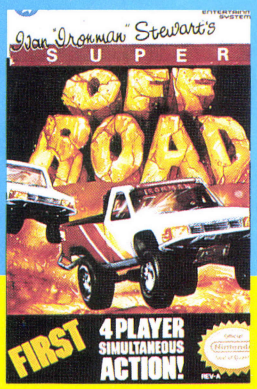
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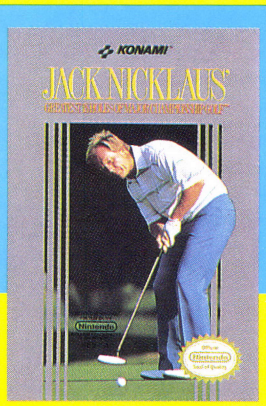
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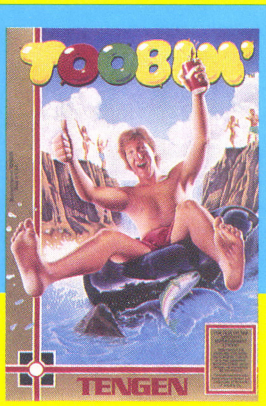
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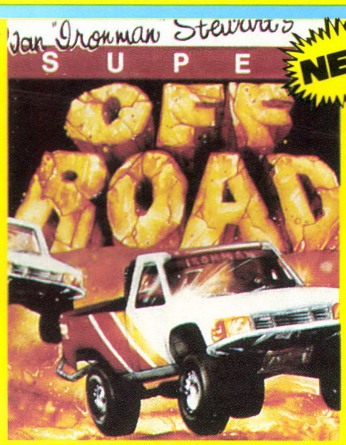
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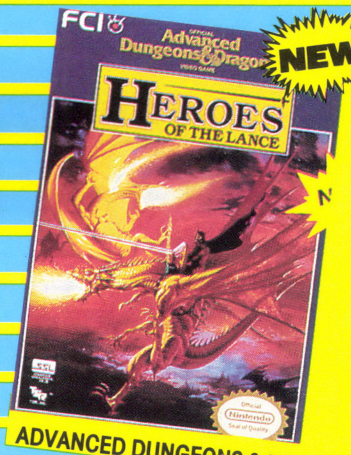
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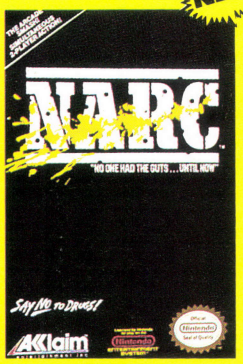
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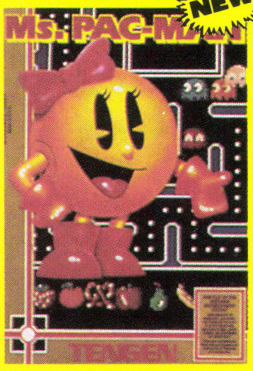
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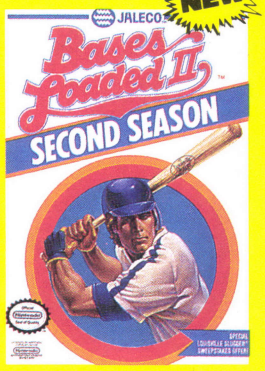
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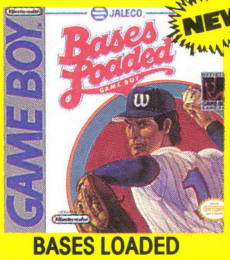
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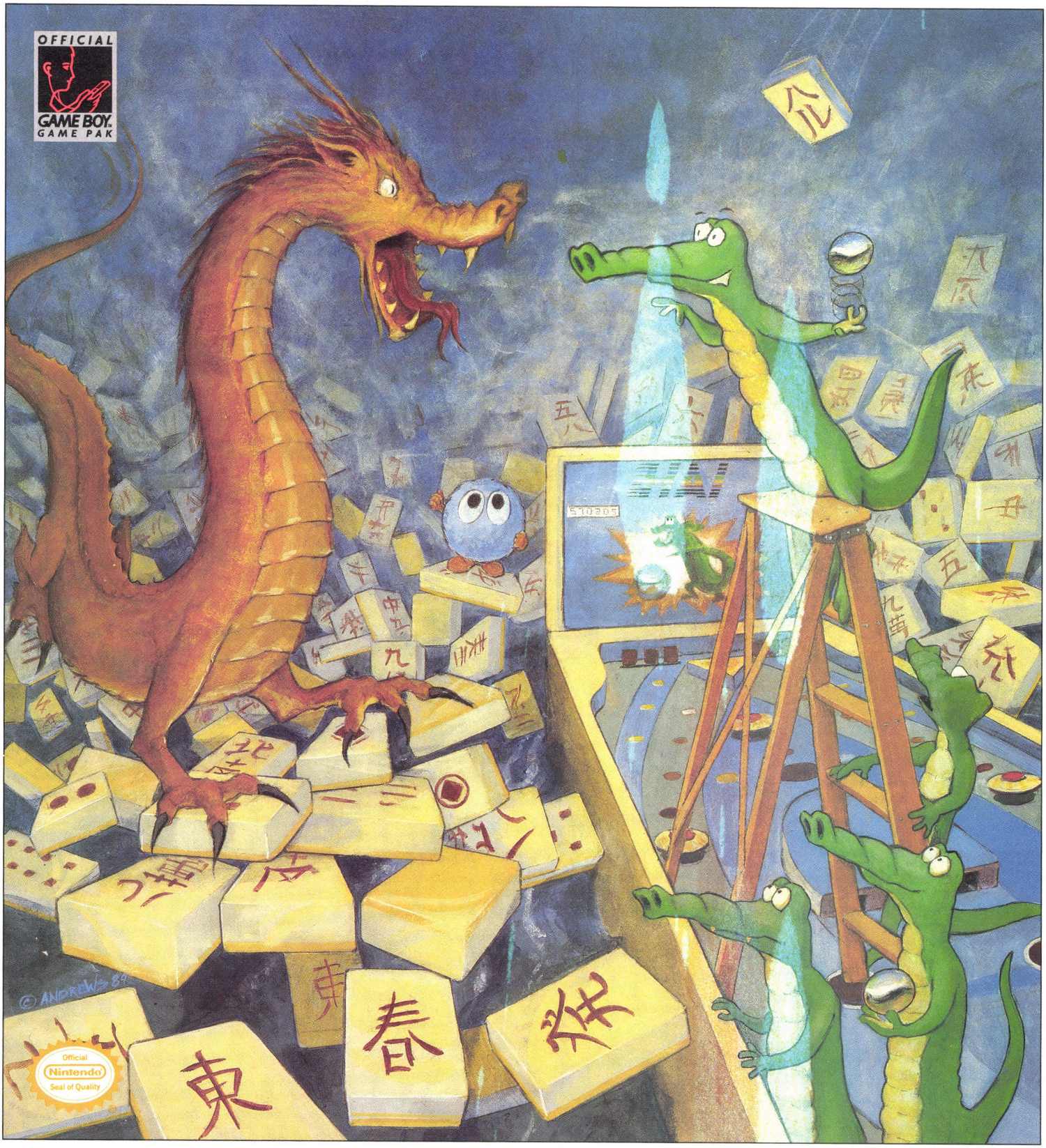
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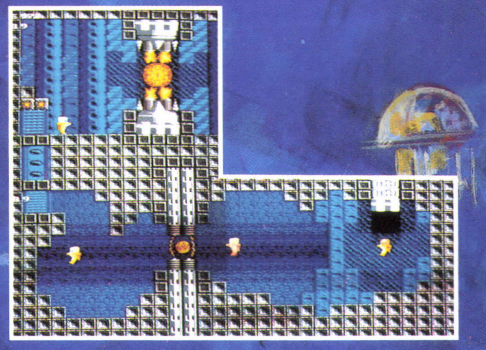
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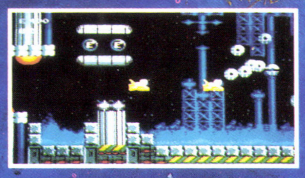
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Second Air Fortress

1 Don't touch these pink Radiation Cones—they will drain your energy very fast. If you're using a joystick, move the handle up and down quickly to cross this area without touching the top or bottom.

2 Wait until this enemy is on the right side of his patrolling pattern, then shoot him from solid ground. That way the recoil won't drive you into the Radiation Cones behind you.

3 These Gravity will change the leve drastically and decr energy level rapidly

6 Shoot these characters from the side to keep from taking hits that will drain your Energy.

7 One of these guys will usually give you an Energy or Bomb boost.

8 Inside the Air Fortress, as well as on the Air Base, the location of Energy and Bomb bubbles can be different each time you play the game. Try to shoot as many defenders as you can—you never know where these little treats are.

9 If you want to knock out one of these installations, one well-aimed Bomb fired while the "eye" is open will do it. Usually the best strategy is just to avoid their shots, but there will be times when you'll have to knock them out.

10 One well-placed Bomb will take care of the small Reactors. Like the Main Reactors, touching any part of the Reactor will decrease your Energy level very quickly.

11 Remember the layout of this area, you will have to use this room in your escape. The left tube goes to your Escape Ship—the right one leads to the Main Reactor. Go up the right tube to blow the Main Reactor.

12 You can't shoot these rollers—just use good timing and pick the right moment to fly through them.

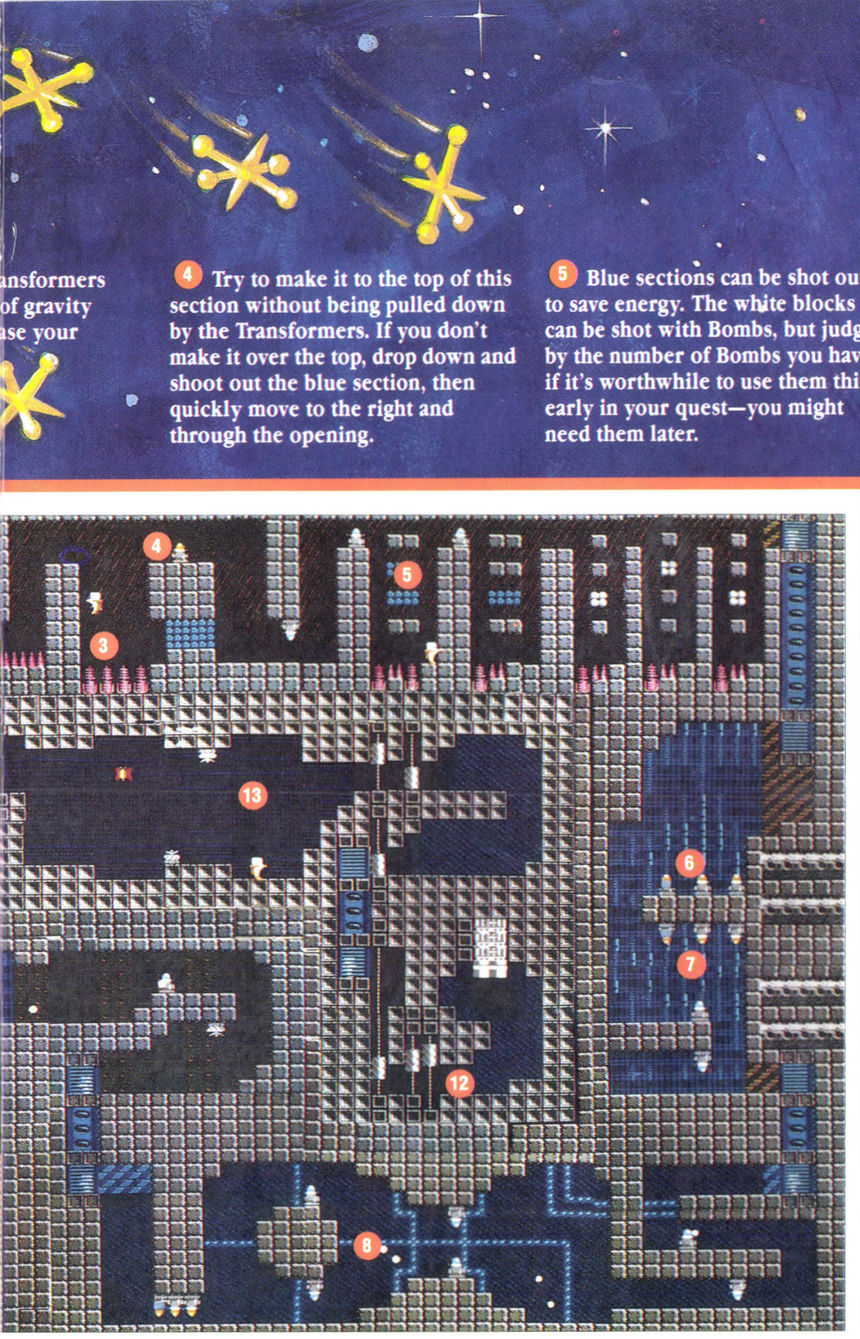


13 Shoot the will always re Energy or som

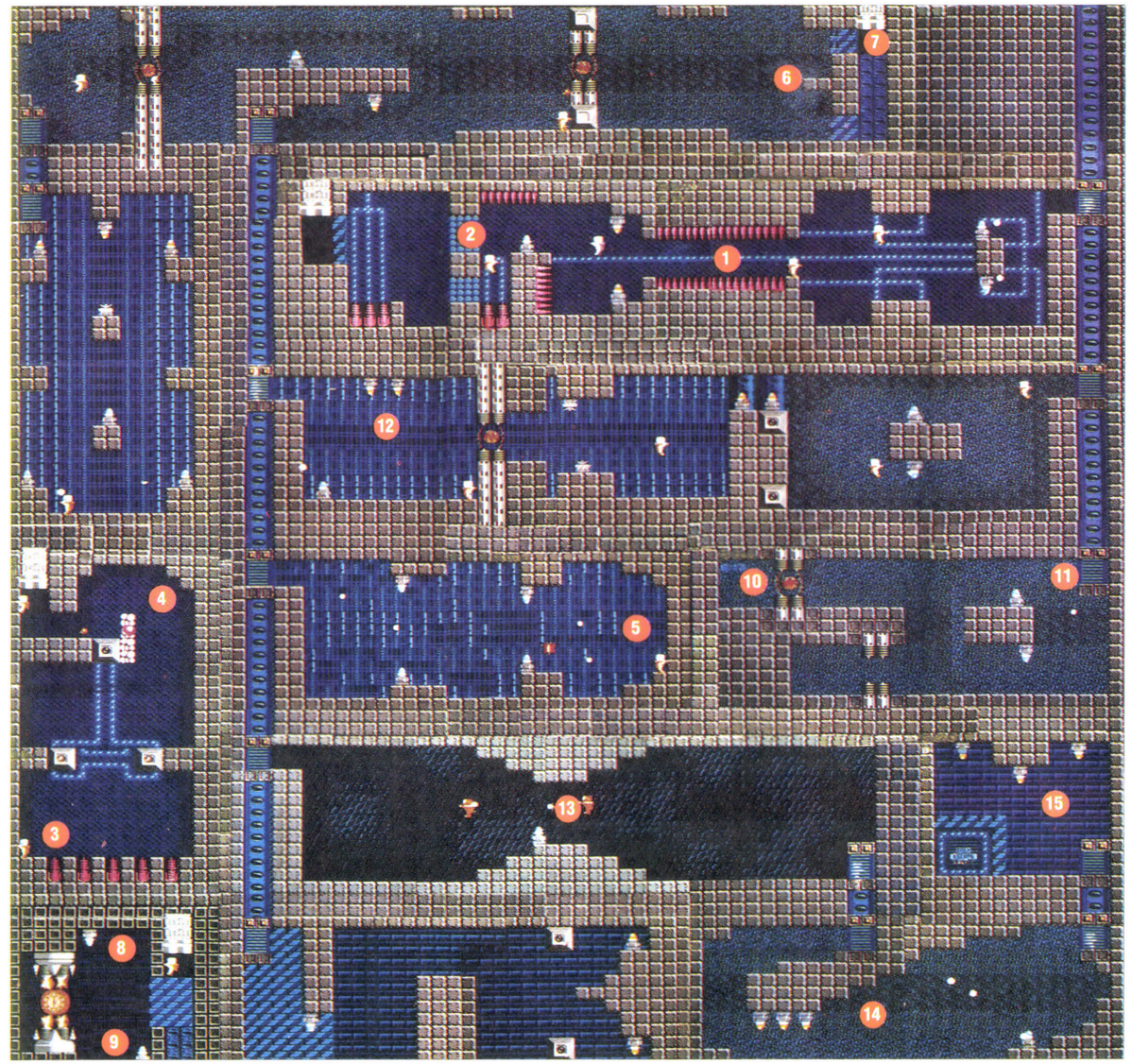
14 A more fo Bombs on this Bomb should fast—aim care your Bombs.

15 The Main Stand clear an your Energy le the Reactor, m keep going lef

Fourth Air Fortress







ansformers
of gravity
ase your

4 Try to make it to the top of this section without being pulled down by the Transformers. If you don't make it over the top, drop down and shoot out the blue section, then quickly move to the right and through the opening.

5 Blue sections can be shot out to save energy. The white blocks can be shot with Bombs, but judge by the number of Bombs you have if it's worthwhile to use them this early in your quest—you might need them later.

3 Use areas of stable gravity to fly to the top of this multi-story room.

4 Shooting this enemy just wastes time and eats up your Energy. But be sure to get past it before the entrance closes up—you may need this passageway later.

5 As usual, pick up the red Butterflies—there's always a little Energy or a couple of Bombs. But be careful of Butterflies of other colors in Fortresses to come.

6 If you shoot the top defender here, you will usually find Energy or Bombs in the bottom one.

7 This tube leads directly to the Main Reactor.

8 Shoot these guys out before you go for the Reactor, so you don't take so many hits.

9 Use Bombs on the Main Reactor. The number of Bombs it takes to knock out a Reactor varies from Fortress to Fortress, and sometimes varies even within the same Fortress. Remember not to touch any part of the Reactor.

10 Shoot out this small Reactor, stay toward the upper part of the room, and head for the elevator.

11 Go up one floor and get off the elevator.

ed Butterflies—they
ard you with some
e Bombs.

midable foe—use
guy. One well-placed
o it, but they move
ully and don't waste

Reactor—the big prize.
blast away, but watch
vel. After you blow
ve through it and

16 Into this tube—you have plenty of time if you don't make any serious mistakes.

17 You should recognize this area. Go to the left, up the elevator, and into the left tube.

18 Go to the left, blow the small Reactor, and you'll find your ship. Congratulations! Off to the next Fortress!

1 Remember—touching these pink Radiation Cones will cause you to lose Energy quickly.

2 Shoot these blue blocks out from solid footing—it's easier than trying to do it while flying over a changing gravity field.

12 Stay clear of this enemy and shoot from a distance—touching it will put you out of action in a couple of seconds. Into the elevator and down two floors.

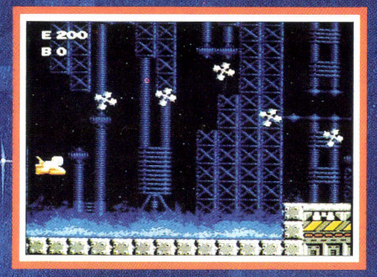
13 There are two of these tough defenders in quick succession. One well-aimed Bomb will take care of each of them, but they're hard to hit, so aim your shots carefully. (Don't back up too far in trying to evade these guys, or you'll end up fighting them more than once).

14 It's better to skip these enemies and run to the Escape Ship as quickly as possible.

15 Get on your ship and you're on your way to the next Fortress and victory!

Air Base Strategies

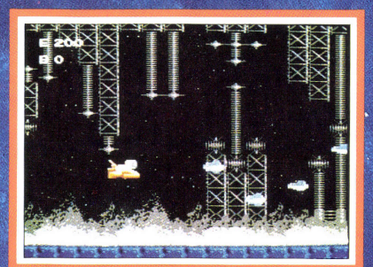
If you want to solve the later Air Fortresses (the difficult ones) you'll have to learn to negotiate the Air Bases and pick up enough Energy and Bomb bubbles to allow you to explore the Air Fortresses. The following tips should help you out.



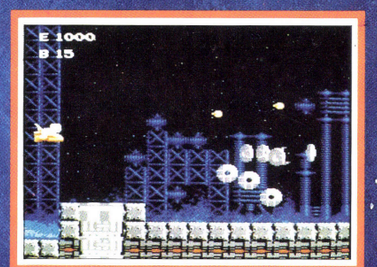
These spinning star-shaped defenders will crowd in and destroy you if you're too slow on the trigger. If you get too many of them on the screen at once, fly in a big circle around them. They'll cluster together, and you can get more of them with a smaller number of shots.



Rockets tend to come in from the top if you're flying low, and from the bottom if you're flying in the top part of the screen. Pick off as many as you can, and out-maneuver the ones that come too fast to hit.



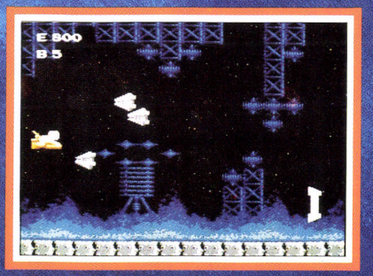
Fighters fly in close formation in easy-to-predict patterns. You can usually pick off a whole wave of them by shooting at the crest or trough of their patrolling pattern. There's rarely any one-ups to be gained by shooting them, but sometimes they hide some goodies—you never can tell!



These flying disks come in waves, sometimes one wave right after another. Watch out for disks that fly from right to left, then reverse direction to attack you from the rear. They can be shot, but are really hard to hit.



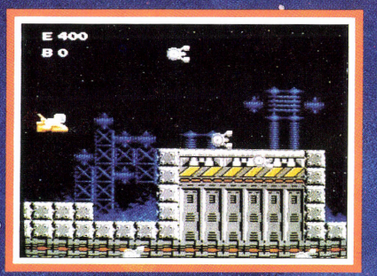
These aerial mines pop up unexpectedly from launch sites on the surface. They don't have any weapons, but they can bring you down fast if you run into one of them.



These ships are formidable enemies. They quickly speed up soon after they appear, so you have to down them right away to keep from being run into.



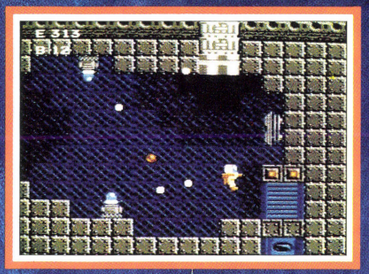
These tumbling missiles come in fast, tight waves that will wipe out your ship before you know it. Stay out of their way!



These small fighters criss-cross in the center of the screen. Stay back and you'll be safe, but pick off as many as you can.

Sixth Air Fortress

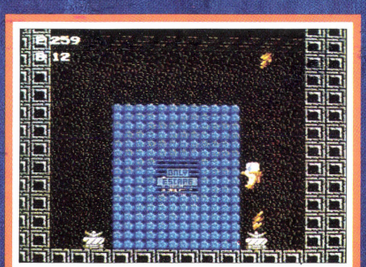
The Sixth Fortress is probably the toughest level of the whole game. If you manage to find and blow up the Main Reactor, you have only enough time to get to your ship, without any mistakes. These tips should help, but you're going to need lots of practice and lots of luck to clear this stage!



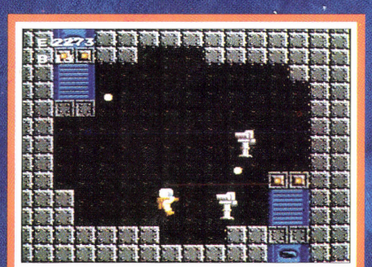
From this point you can get to all of the places you need to go—down the elevator leads to the Main Reactor, the tube leads to your Escape Ship.



From the Fifth Fortress on, you'll have to find the Main Reactor, then find your ship, and clear out all the areas in between if you're going to escape in time.



Once you blow the Main Reactor you're going to have to get to your ship ASAP. This is where all of the tricks you've learned will come in handy. When you get to your ship, watch out for these tanks—they can burn up your store of energy real fast!



These guys are really annoying, but luck, a fast trigger finger, and a couple of Bombs will put them out of commission in short order.



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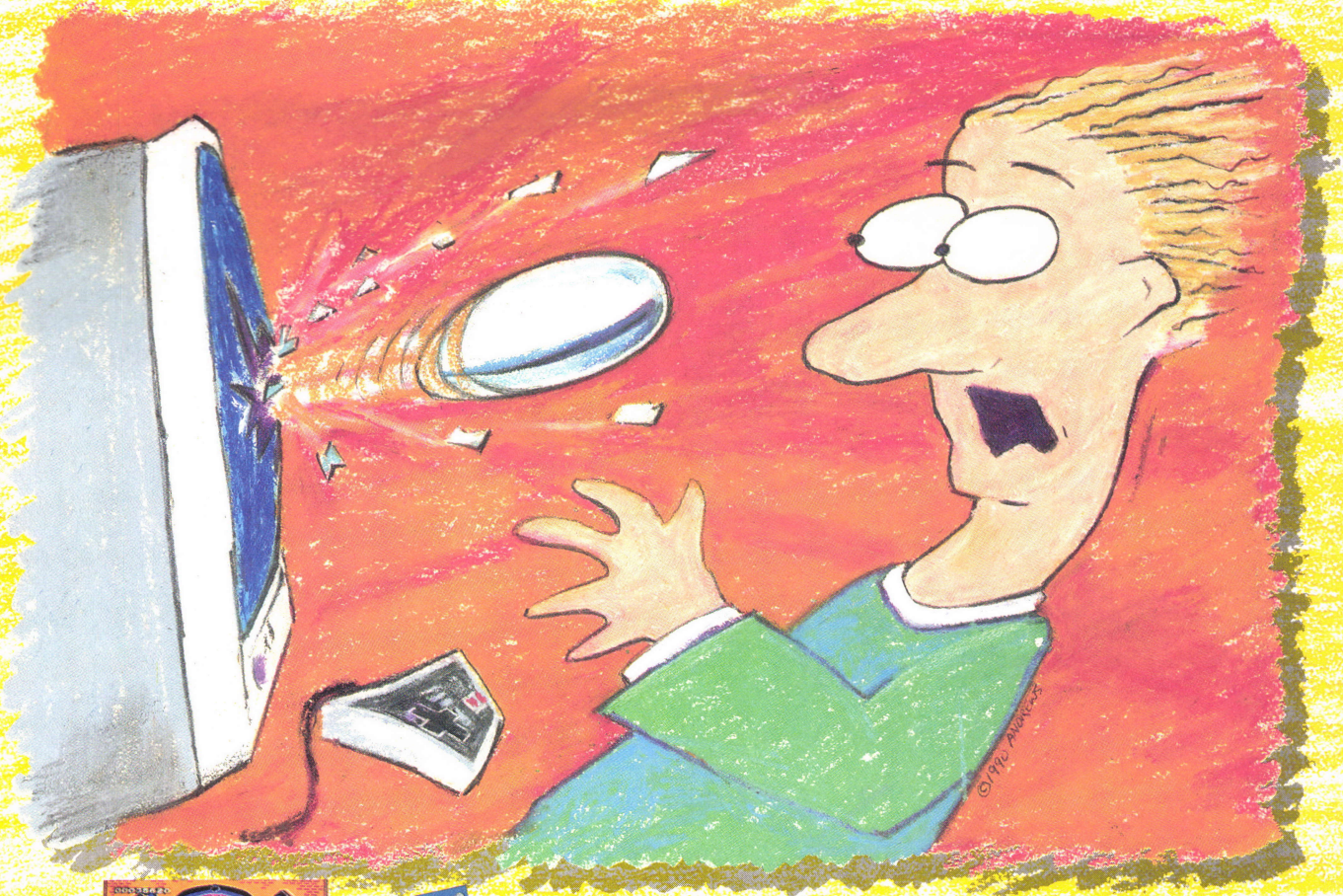
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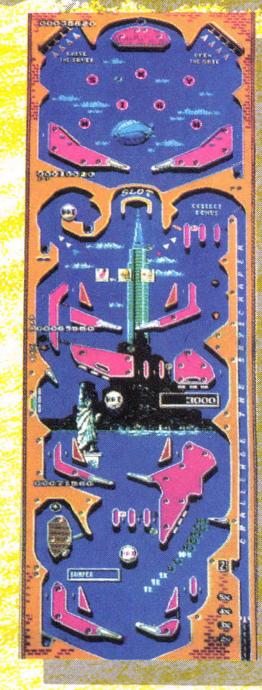
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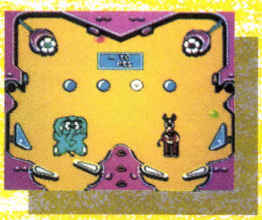






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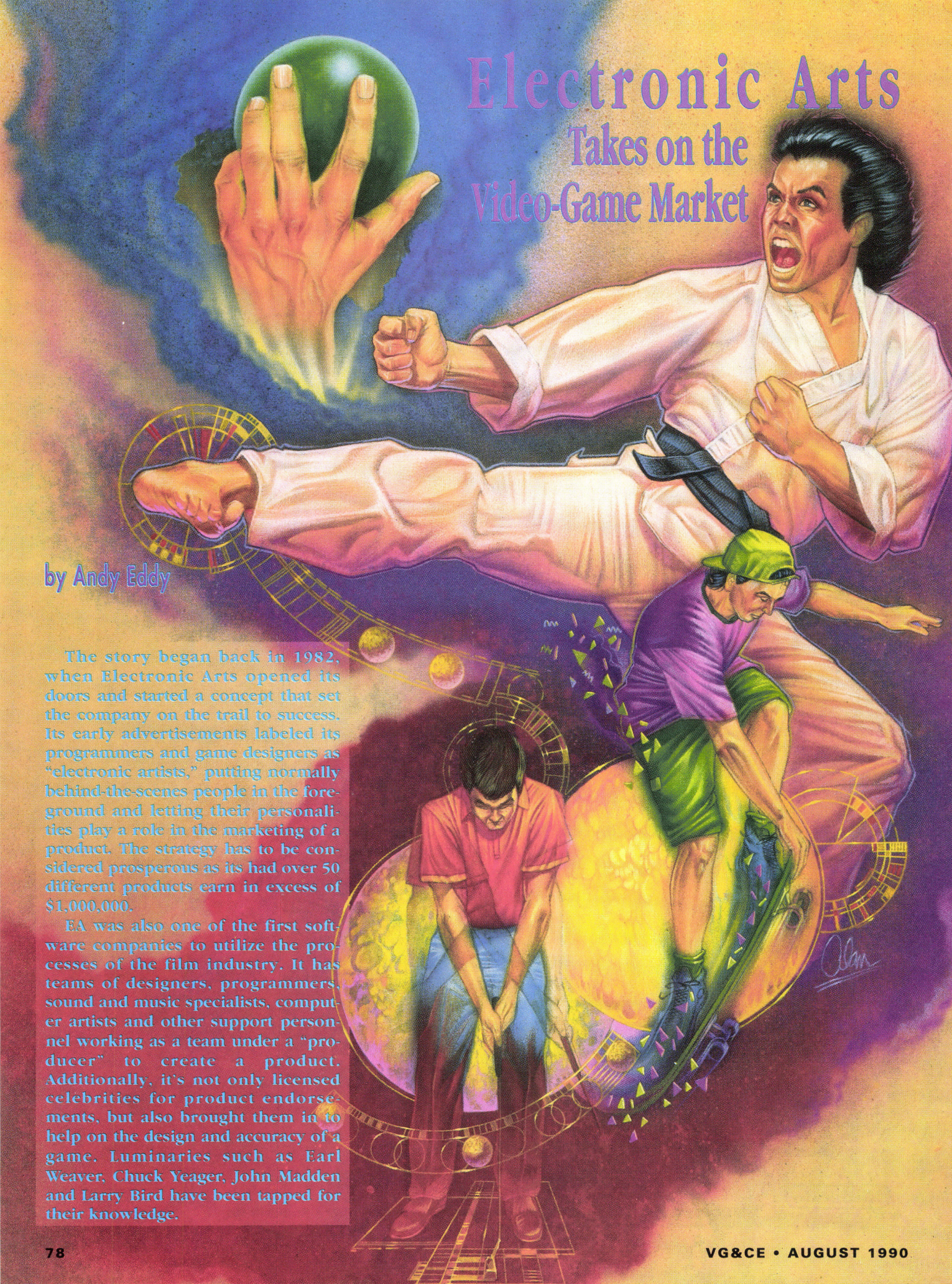
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From the makers of REVENGE OF THE 'GATOR

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Electronic Arts Takes on the Video-Game Market



by Andy Eddy

The story began back in 1982, when Electronic Arts opened its doors and started a concept that set the company on the trail to success. Its early advertisements labeled its programmers and game designers as "electronic artists," putting normally behind-the-scenes people in the foreground and letting their personalities play a role in the marketing of a product. The strategy has to be considered prosperous as its had over 50 different products earn in excess of $1,000,000.

EA was also one of the first software companies to utilize the processes of the film industry. It has teams of designers, programmers, sound and music specialists, computer artists and other support personnel working as a team under a "producer" to create a product. Additionally, it's not only licensed celebrities for product endorsements, but also brought them in to help on the design and accuracy of a game. Luminaries such as Earl Weaver, Chuck Yeager, John Madden and Larry Bird have been tapped for their knowledge.

EA has seen the industry at its high and low points and changed its strategy accordingly. In EA's stock prospectus of September 1989, the innovative company set out the latest step in its forceful scheme to dominate the interactive-entertainment world. "The company believes that the total market demand and retail shelf space available for floppy disk-based entertainment software has been level or declining over the past 12 to 18 months, a trend the company believes is likely to continue, due in part to the rapid growth of demand for software for video-game systems," the prospectus stated. "The company intends to develop products for video-game systems and currently hopes to be in a position to ship its first such products in time for the 1990 year-end holiday season. The company believes that a new generation of 16-bit video-game systems, with their substantially enhanced performance and audiovisual capabilities, will provide a long-term platform for a mass-market home-entertainment medium."

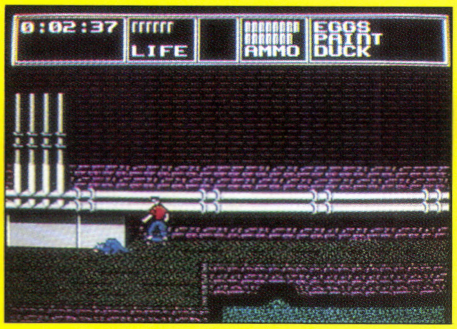
Though the impact of the next-generation machines, NEC's TurboGrafx-16 and Sega's Genesis, hasn't fully been established, EA's goal will have been accurately achieved—and, not surprisingly, it will be in quantity. By the time you read this, EA will have begun its foray into video games with the introduction of four powerful products on two different game consoles, the Nintendo Entertainment System and the Genesis.

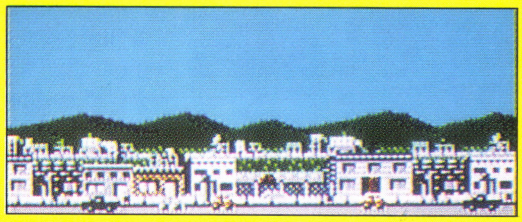
Strong Out of the Gate

Computer gamers have always expected innovation from EA. It virtually invented the construction-set genre, starting with Bill Budge's *Pinball Construction Set*, filling the screen with parts and tools and letting the player define the parameters and shape of a game that he or she created.

The titles that EA is unleashing on the video-game world certainly aren't anything new to readers of VG&CE. Given the strength of the Genesis particularly, the products on that system will virtually re-create their computer predecessors. Here's what video gamers have in store from the EA studios:

Skate or Die 2: The Search for Double Trouble **(Nintendo Entertainment System/September 1990)**—A sequel to the popular *Skate or Die*, which showed up on the NES courtesy of Ultra from a license by EA, the second chapter leads you through more sidewalk-shredding skateboarding and adventuring. It seems that you wiped out on the mayor's wife's doggie, and Mr. Mayor has dug up an ancient law to deem your old ramp illegal, leaving you in search of new terrain to tear up with your board. Your local buddies, skateshop owner Rodney and his son Lester, are going to help you build a new ramp to keep you away from the long arm of the law, but first you have to earn it over four levels of skating action.





Elmwood was a quiet town until you ran over the Mayor's puppy dog. Now he's out to bring a halt to your skateboarding fun, but you won't let that stand in your way as you shred through Skate or Die 2 *for the NES.*

As you skate the streets of Elmwood in Level 1, you can gather up CDs, tapes, tacos and chili fries, which in turn can be traded to Rodney and Lester for new moves and hotter, faster boards. You are also equipped with a paint-ball gun to dispatch your enemies before they inflict their damage on you. Before you can exit this level, you have to take on Mrs. Mayor herself with your cache of paint balls, eggs and M-80s.

You can't get a building permit without some cash, so Level 2 unleashes you on the mall, delivering packages for local merchants. Sounds simple enough, but you'll be harassed by credit card-carrying zombie shoppers and Officer Renckley of the mall security.

Now you've got the bucks, but what do you know about building an awesome half-pipe ramp? Rodney had the plans, but they've blown out the window and onto the boardwalk. You have to gather up all 16 pages of the blueprints without succumbing to the dangers of the beach: among them, crunchy crabs that can be stomped; mad gulls who threaten you from the skies; and buff dudes who do more than kick sand in your face.

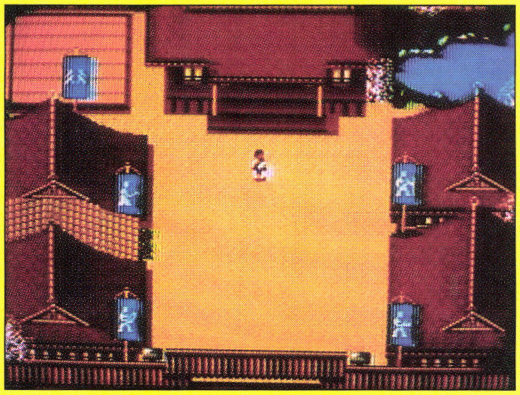
The final action round takes you to the Elmwood rooftops in search of Icepick, the gang leader who took your building permit *and* your girlfriend, CJ. If you can skate past—or through—Icepick's gang, you'll be free and clear to build and shred your hot ramp, "Double Trouble."

Once built, Double Trouble needs to be conquered, and you have lots of moves in your bag of tricks to become King of the Ramp. (Impatient players can rejoice in the fact that EA has designed *Skate or Die 2* with the ability to bypass all the other *nonsense* and go straight to Double Trouble.)

Budokan: The Martial Spirit **(Sega Genesis/June 1990)**—There are tons of martial-arts cartridges in the video-game world, but *Budokan* takes the concept one step further: You have to train in various forms of Japanese/Okinawan martial arts, then compete against opponents in realistic sparring matches. The manual describes how to play and also serves as a reference guide on how the diverse weapons—such as the nunchaku, the bo staff and shuriken—in *Budokan* operate.

The Genesis' strength in animation and palette of colors lets EA accomplish a polished appearance, not only of the characters' movement, but also the backgrounds that provide a fitting atmosphere for *Budokan*. Each form of martial art you indulge in allows over 30 different moves, rather than the simple selections most punch-and-kick games feature. Your belt color even changes as you become more proficient.

Before you go to the Budokan, the Tokyo site of your tournaments, you can take advantage of the *Tobiko-Ryu Dojo*, the training halls that give you an opportunity to brush up on your skills in the assorted arts. From the courtyard, which contains the four main training centers, you can also practice your abilities against another player in free sparring.





Budokan *is more than just another martial-arts game; it features a training area, four disciplines to study and a tournament to test your skill.*

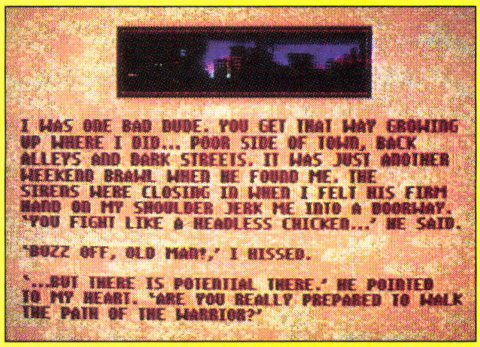
More important, however, is the assessment of your talents during all these stages by Tobiko-Sensei, your master and teacher. His advice will help you to become more proficient in combat and learn to conserve your energy level while fighting.

Budokan features one elemental difference from most karate contests in that you not only have to keep tabs on your physical-energy level or stamina, but also on your *ki*, the energy of the universe that flows through you. Mastery in this game isn't served by a relentless attack, which drains your stamina and ki, but instead requires a paced strategy as you are taught in actual martial-arts techniques.

***Populous* (Sega Genesis/June 1990)**—"You give them good land. You tell them when to farm and when to fight. You make them content beyond their wildest dreams. But then they become raging arsonists. What's a deity to do?"

Voted the Computer Game of the Year in VG&CE's *Best Games of 1989* voting (VG&CE, February 1990), *Populous* has taken the computer-game world by storm. Now it attempts to capture the video-game market as well.

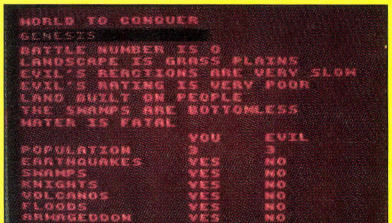
Granted, *Populous* has also garnered a fair amount of controversy because of its concept—you are a deity who rules over a land and attempts to keep the evil god in check. A board game in video

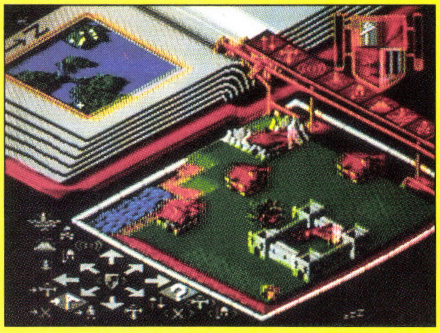


form, *Populous* is much like Maxis' *SimCity* in that it lets you take terrain and turn it into a functioning community. What it adds though, is strategic competition by giving you an evil opponent that can counteract your good deeds. Thanks to your ability to cultivate "natural" disasters like volcanoes, quakes and floods, you can nip your nasty counterpart's progress in the bud. (Not all good gods can be do-gooders all the time!)

Created by England's Bullfrog Productions development group, profiled in the December 1989 issue of VG&CE, *Populous* is a simulation that's indicative of EA's innovation—it doesn't follow trends in game design and isn't a "same old, same old" game.

Populous has an icon-based command





All the strategy and excitement of running your own world is captured in the Genesis translation of Populous.

structure; you simply click on a symbol to cause something to happen. All the on-screen action takes place on a map called the Book of Worlds. Your closeup map can be scrolled to show you details of what is taking place in your land. To develop your settlements, you need to take care of things that all deities deal with: raising and lowering land levels so building and planting can take place; "hiring" a leader to gather and unite your followers; planting your Papal Magnet, thus giving your "flock" a common location at which to congregate; and even inducing Armageddon, bringing both good and evil together for a final confrontation.

The key to *Populous* is that it's easy to learn but hard to master—a concept that many games strive for but rarely achieve. And the quality of the Genesis brings all aspects of the computer versions to the screen without sacrifice.

***Zany Golf* (Sega Genesis/August 1990)**—Another import from EA's successful computer-game crop, this miniature-golf simulation lives up to its name; it's wacky and loads of fun.

The Genesis rendition of the game will offer what the computer version did and more by offering a total of 18 holes for longer play action. Featuring easy-to-learn controls, you simply pull back a "string" that indicates how hard you want to hit the ball and in what direction, and you're off. And because video games can be designed with out-of-this-world aspects, Will Harvey, the man behind *Zany Golf*, created a course to boggle the mind. How about a hole that is blocked by a giant hamburger, which must be bounced higher and higher so that it doesn't impede your shots. Or try the truly impossible, such as Ant Hill, which has a hole that wanders around as you get close to it. The bonus hole offers some bizarre hazards, such as a checkerboard with certain squares that will transport your ball back to a previous location, as well as a *Breakout*-like section to clear before proceeding.

One of the strong points of *Zany Golf* is that it can be played by up to four players head-to-head. Much like playing real miniature golf, it's much more fun that way. The only thing missing is the smell of grass, but seeing that most pitch-'n'-putt courses are on carpet, it's no loss.

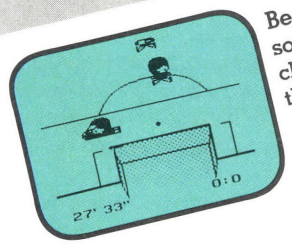
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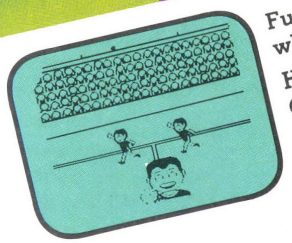
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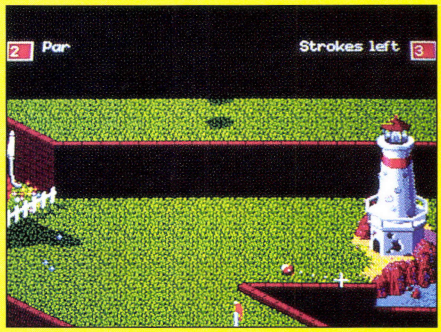
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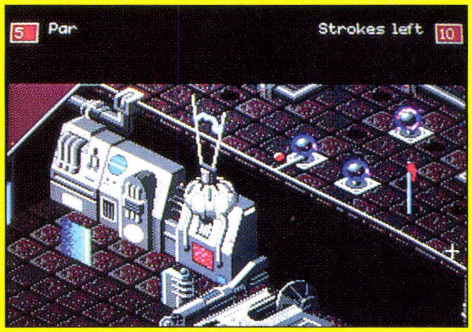
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CIRCLE #134 ON READER SERVICE CARD.





The Genesis interpretation of Zany Golf *will elaborate upon the original computer version: It will feature a full 18 holes of miniature-golf fun.*

Where Does EA Go From Here?

These four games aren't all that EA has planned, thankfully. Two other games are in the works, one for the Genesis and one for the NES—but it won't stop there.

Lakers vs. Celtics is intended for release on the Genesis by Christmas, and it will enhance the computer version of the basketball game by offering larger renditions of the players and other graphics, five-on-five action, tournament play and ten different pro teams. As EA predicts, the players will come alive on your screen.

Three-dimensional graphics will be the highlight of *The Immortal*, an NES game that has no release date set at press time. This cartridge will also be the first to show dark and dingy dungeon surroundings from a three-quarters viewpoint above the terrain.

In *The Immortal*, you play a wizard who must find your long-lost teacher, Mordamir. Through the seven levels that make up the dungeon, you'll face all forms of enemies, such as goblins, spiders and trolls. You'd also be wise to put on your thinking cap to get you past the various puzzles and other surprises that will muddle your mission.

The thought of Electronic Arts entering the video-game biz is exciting because it will bring lots of fresh choices to store shelves. Consumers around the world will delight in the new, creative gaming open to them. Unfortunately, EA's show of software force probably also has some other NES licensees quaking in their boots.

THE BUSINESS OF PLAY: EA's Main Man Talks About Video Games

It's a tough job, but somebody has to do it.

Someone has to sit down and come up with a game concept. Someone has to sit down and program the code. Someone has to sit down and design the graphics. Someone has to sit down and create the sound effects and soundtrack. Someone has to sit down and "produce" the effort, making sure everyone stays on schedule.

But only one person can stand up for the whole process *and* make sure that all the financial data is in place, be positive that distribution and PR are doing their jobs *and* keep everyone on top of the business side of things. Someone has to hold the reins, and in EA's case, that someone is the president and chief Executive officer, William M. "Trip" Hawkins III. As one of EA's founders, he's witnessed the highs and lows the industry and his company have gone through.

But EA's decision to enter the video-game market under its own name—their products have been only previously licensed to other companies for NES development—is definitely a high point in their history. "It takes a lot of money to play the game [of competing in the video-game business], and going public [in 1989] helped raise the necessary capital. But we didn't want to bet the company on the video-game business—nor limit it to just one format.

"We're pretty excited about Nintendo," Hawkins noted. It has a great customer-support network and provides a lot of assistance to companies who are developing games for the NES."

The fact that EA showed us a nearly finished version of *Skate or Die 2*, even though it only recently received a license for third-party development, brings up the obvious question of whether the company was banking on getting the license. Hawkins stated that EA started development about a year ago because it wanted to get into the video-game market, though the "how" was unknown. "We had two options: to get a license from Nintendo or license the game to another company and give it finished product," Hawkins said. "There were times we thought it would be lucrative to go [the latter] route, but we wanted to get into the business with Nintendo. Nintendo is a marketing company—being a licensee we can benefit a lot from that."

The Sega connection evolved differently, because Sega has no hardware-based lockout system in the Genesis, as Nintendo utilizes in the NES (the legality of which is still an issue to be decided in court no earlier than 1991). This allowed EA to bypass licensing with Sega. "Sega doesn't have the same kind of marketing strength as Nintendo. We never felt that we needed a license (with Sega). We're still in negotiation with Sega, but we didn't feel that we needed their trademark on our products."

Just the same, it wasn't a market EA could ignore. "We made a judgement call a year ago that the Genesis would be successful," Hawkins commented. "We also felt that from a technology standpoint, the Genesis development could easily be brought over to other 16-bit systems later." A flash of the future comes into the minds'-eye view, of video-game systems even more intense than those available now—with EA confidently porting their games to them.

"Sega's sold about half a million [Genesis] systems in the U.S., and it won't have more than 40 titles out for [Genesis] by the end of the year. Each title could sell about 100,000 units, which is much better than the IBM market."

Regardless of what system(s) EA develops on, Hawkins is confident of what the electronic-gaming industry offers. "We're helping people play, and scientists have proven that playing is the strongest contributor to intelligence. Part of what I feel is my mission is getting people to understand that it's okay to play. Competitiveness is a great motivator.

"[Before starting Electronic Arts,] I had a significant equity position at Apple. I would probably have a million-dollar salary if I had stayed, but I'm doing what I want to now. If you're really an entrepreneur, you have a vision and a passion—you're a creative person who has to get your ideas out. The really creative people say they *have* to do it." And Electronic Arts, behind Trip Hawkins' vision and passion, *is* doing it.

—A.E.

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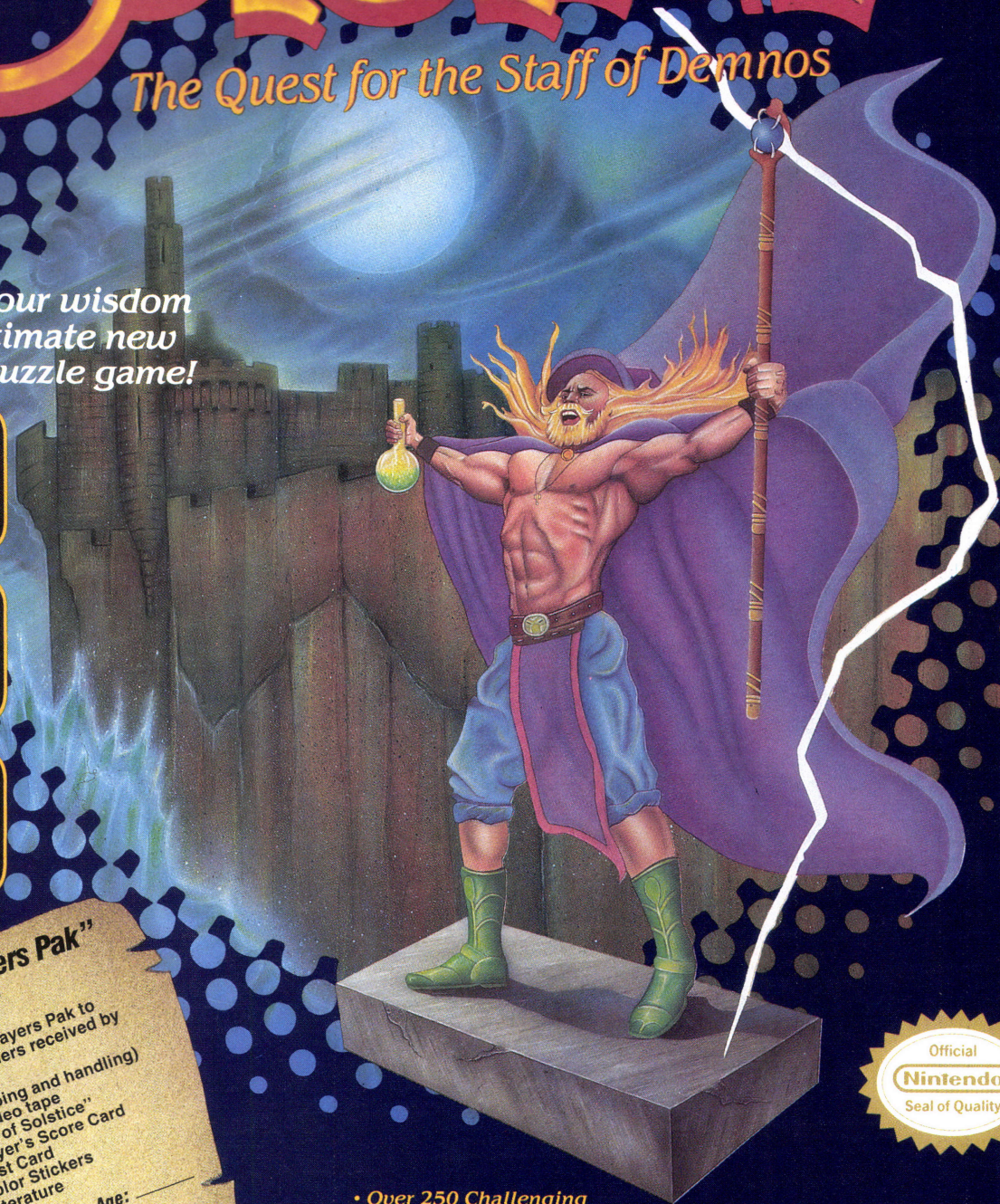
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Nintendo Power™ - March/April 1990

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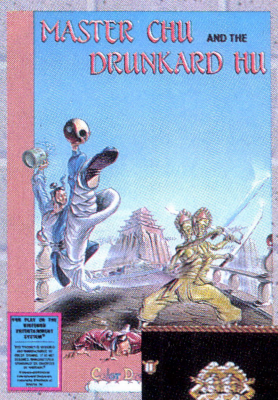
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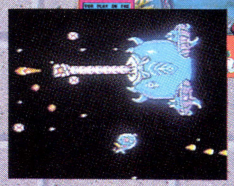
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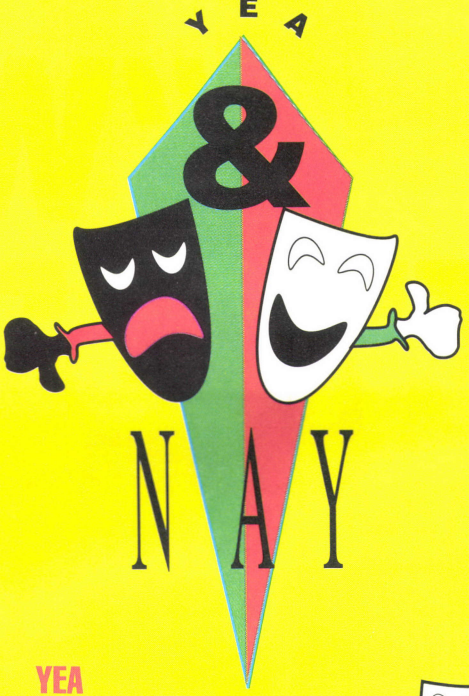
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CIRCLE #136 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Yea & Nay is an inside look at the high and low points in the electronic-game industry. It's an opportunity for the companies that decide what games we'll be playing to be patted on the back or slammed to the mat for what they do. If you want to give credit where credit is due—whether the company belongs in the Hall of Fame or Hall of Shame—send your opinions to VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, Attn: Yea & Nay. Let's hear how you feel!



YEA



We've said it before, but a hip hip hooray to Tengen/Atari Games for releasing the same titles on multiple platforms. A good example is *Klax*, which will be out for the TG-16, Lynx (this version is being developed by Atari Corp. under an agreement with Atari Games), NES, Genesis and a number of home computers. Since it's come out from under the thumb of Nintendo's restrictive third-party licensing program, Tengen has been vigorous in its software-development pursuits. Though its legal department is also busy, sadly enough, we're sure the company will survive—and flourish. Keep up the good work!



YEA



Let's give a cheer for the promise of this year's crop of Christmas products. Though our next issue will likely introduce you to all the stories that the Summer Consumer Electronics Show produced, we already know that the TG-16 portable (detailed in the last issue of VG&CE) is almost definite for 1990, there will be new Lynx software (as well as the possibility of a scaled-down Lynx), new Genesis software and third-party licensees (17 of them from our preliminary count) and lots more.

Even though it's still summer, Christmas is just around the corner. How much are you going to spend on yourself?

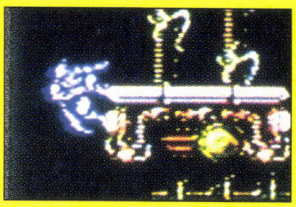


NAY



We were really anxious when we heard there was an NES-compatible in the works, but now it looks as though we may never see it. We can understand why BDL Enterprises (see News Bits, VG&CE, July 1990) is abiding by Nintendo's wishes not to release this innovative product, even though BDL has a substantial stake in the development of the product, but it's sad that Nintendo is sitting back on its current technology and not forging ahead. The Game Boy is quickly being overshadowed by the Lynx and the promise of a TG-16 portable. Also, though we don't have the whole story, keep your eyes on Sega, who is introducing a portable in Japan under the name Game Gear or, as it's called, GG (Gigi).

We think Nintendo will someday regret not being more aggressive.



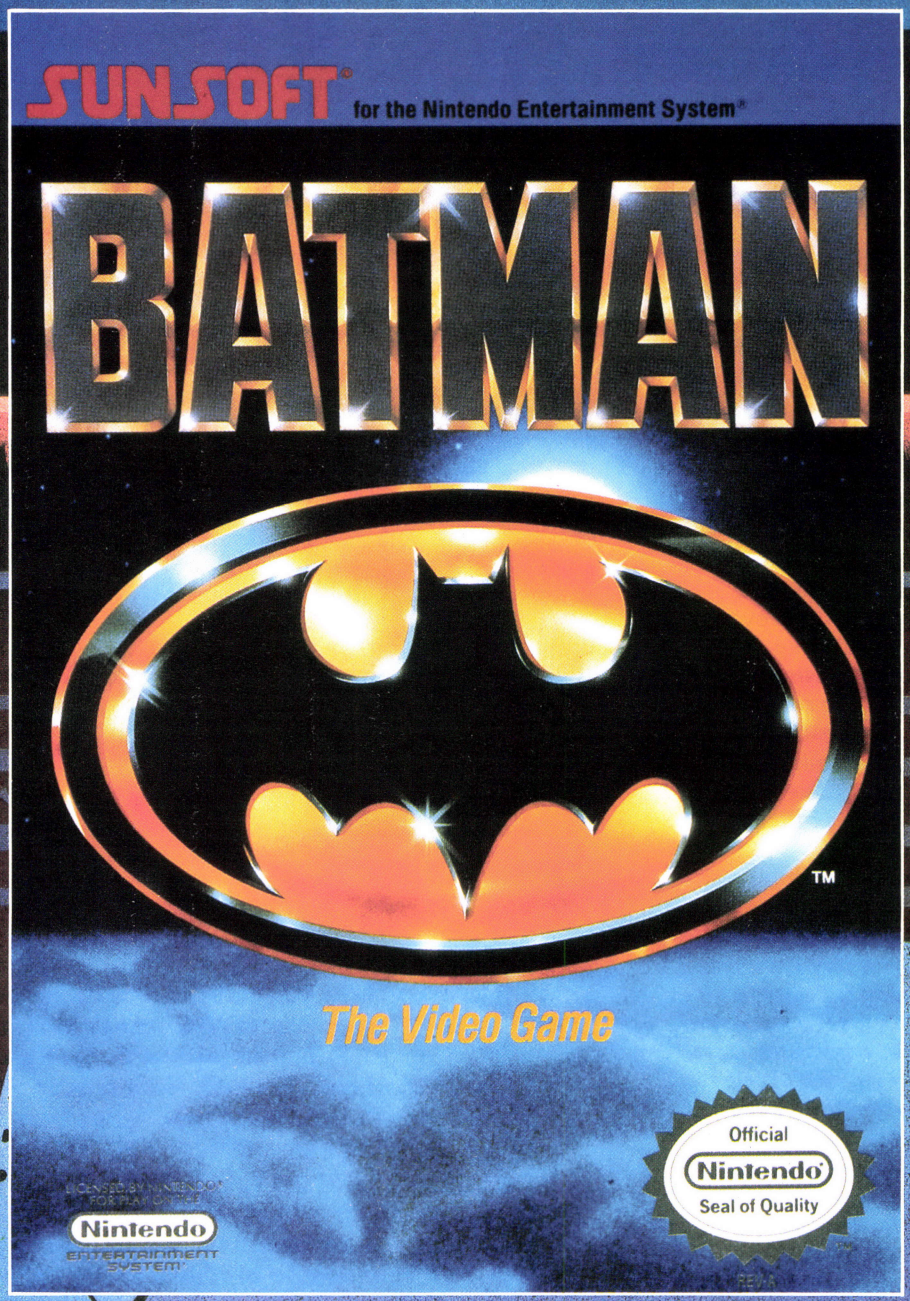
YEA & NAY



Have you noticed that many of the new crop of NES games look better? Well, cartridges like Sunsoft's *Batman* and Nintendo's own *Super Mario Bros. 3* benefit from a new chip called the MMC3 (memory management chip). Word reaches us from the grapevine that Nintendo has developed MMC5 and MMC6 chips, which will also improve graphics on the NES games of the future. But is this all good news? Unfortunately, it is likely that any games utilizing this new technology will also sport a price over $50. We approach this subject cautiously, as firm facts in *Nintendoland* are hard to dig up, but reliable sources tell us that quality NES software will simply cost more. VG&CE will have an in-depth report in a future issue on the effect of the new MMC chips, which have some third-party licensees up in arms.

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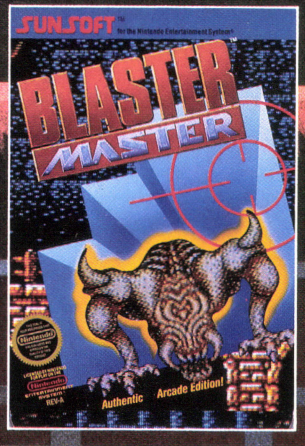
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BATTLING THE BEHEMOTH:

A Player's Guide to *Shadowgate*

BY CLAYTON WALNUM

"He's at it again," Lakmir bellowed, stroking his white beard and nodding. "Sure enough, he is."

Jasper leaned back and fanned his face with his hand. The wizard had been chewing toadstools again, and his breath was strong enough to lift a horse. "Who," Jasper inquired, fighting a wave of dizziness, "is at what?"

Lakmir tapped his nose as he examined a rack of test tubes. Presently, he snatched one up, mumbling something unintelligible and spilling green, fizzing goo onto his white lab coat. Malcolm, the wizard's cat, leaped from his bed in front of the fire and streaked, howling, out the door. Lakmir chuckled. "Poor Malcolm. Yesterday, I accidentally turned him into a cashew. He still hasn't forgiven me."

Jasper shook his head. He felt sorry for the cat, but not nearly as sorry as he did for Thelma Balliwack, whom Lakmir had "accidentally" changed into a bowling ball after she had creamed him at Middle Ages Lanes the previous Wednesday. Lakmir had changed her back, of course. But she still complained of headaches, and her husband, Lester Balliwack, whined bitterly about losing the ball that had won him that year's first-place trophy.

"Who," Jasper repeated, "is at what?"

"The Warlock Lord," Lakmir replied. "has threatened to raise the behemoth and destroy the world. I don't have to tell you what that'll do to bowling night."

Jasper shrugged. "What do I care? I don't bowl."

"Maybe not, but you're the one for the job."

Jasper cocked his head. "Job? What job?"

The wizard smiled and dropped the test tube. It tumbled end over end, hit the floor, then exploded into a green cloud of gas.

When the smoke cleared, Lakmir and his lab were gone. Now Jasper stood gasping and wheezing before the front door of Shadowgate Castle.

"Well," he said, "this makes my day complete."

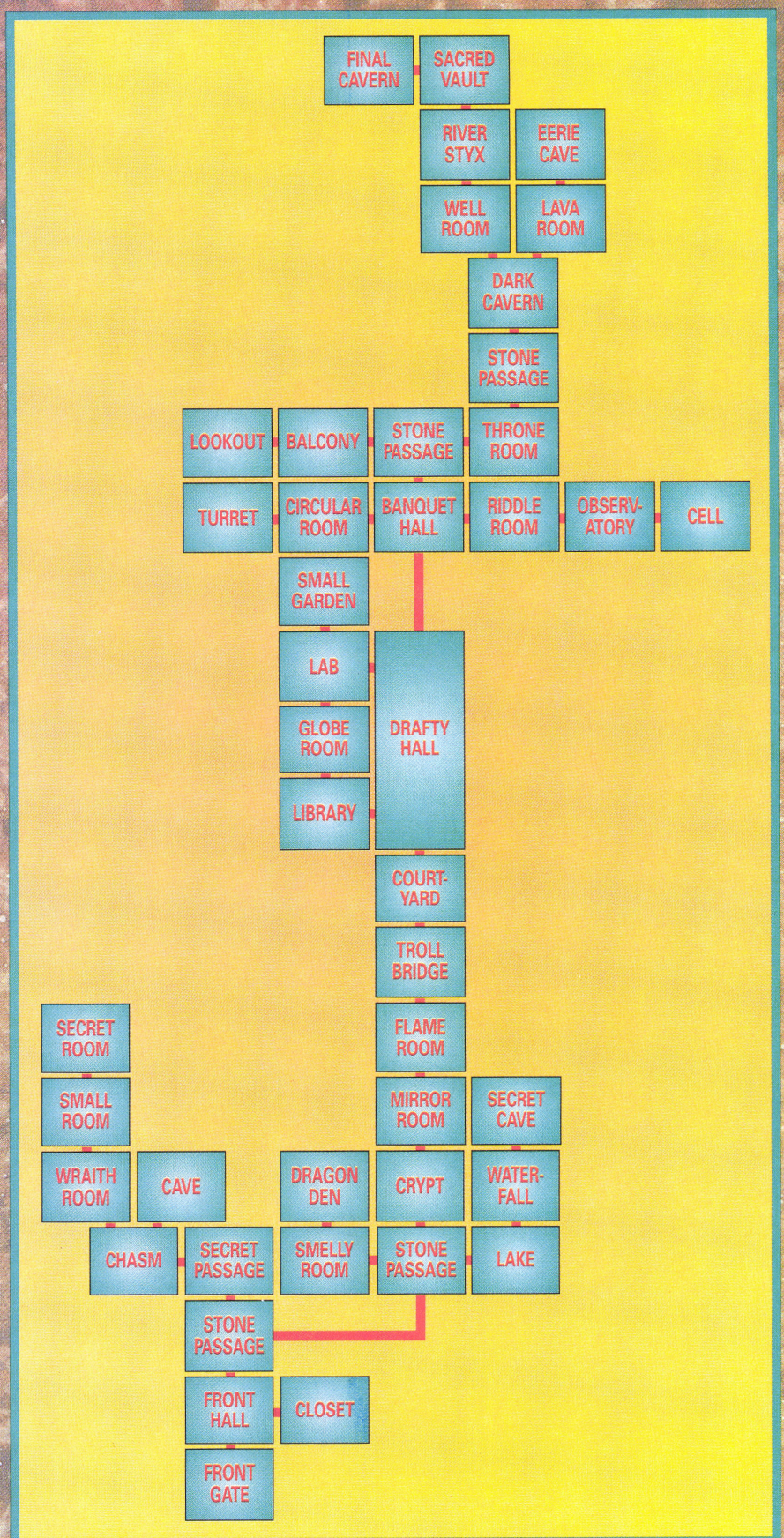
"Mine too," said the Warlock Lord.

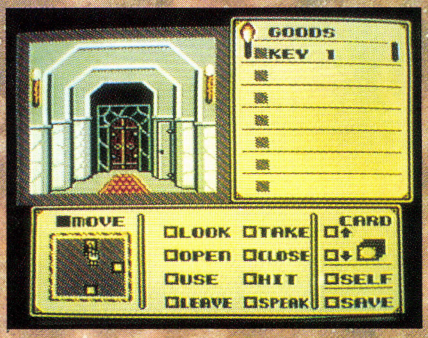
Text adventures like *Shadowgate* have a long and distinguished past. They were the first types of computer games and have endured largely due to their ability to draw the player into the story. Playing a text adventure is much like reading a good book—only you don't have to be a passive bystander. With a text adventure you can take part in the action.

If you've never experienced a text adventures, you might find *Shadowgate* confusing at first. As you play, keep in mind that your job is to determine how to use the many items you'll find in Shadowgate castle. Basically, the game is nothing more than a long series of puzzles. Can't open that door? Use a key. Want to melt some ice? Use something hot. Unlike arcade games, if you get stuck for a solution in a text adventure, you *really* get stuck. A single puzzle might take hours to solve. So, in order to make your *Shadowgate* playing experience as pleasant as possible, we've put together a series of hints and solutions for most of the puzzles in the game. Please, *do not read the following clues except as a last resort.* Try to solve the game on your own. That's why you bought it, right?

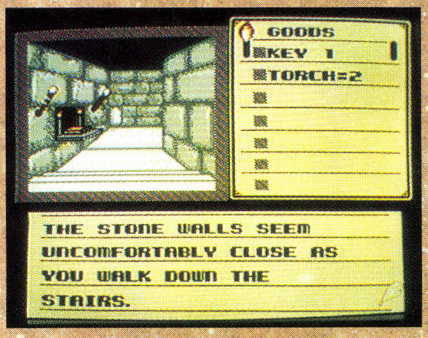
Good luck!

ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT ERNSTER

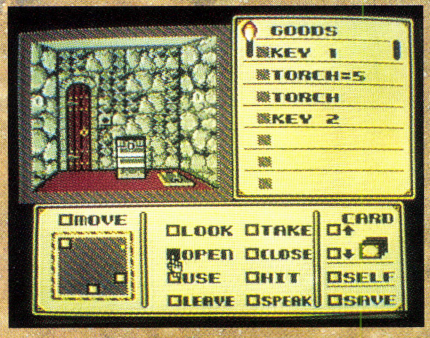




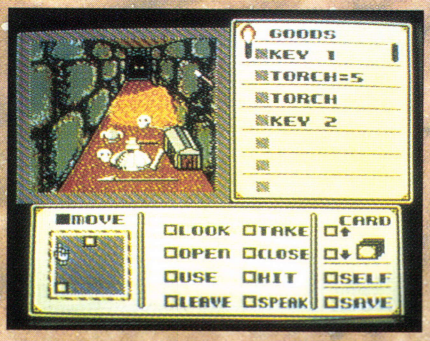
There are two doors here, both of which require a key. The first key is in the skull above the front gate. The second is in a book. Make sure you take the torches before you depart this room. In fact, throughout the game, take every torch you can.



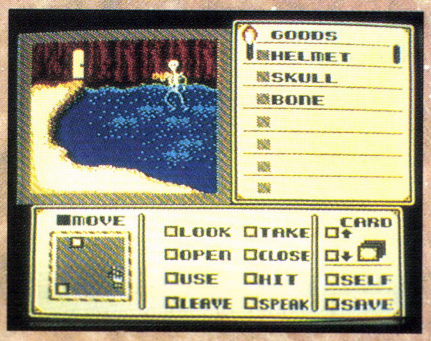
Here's the book with the key. But don't pick the book up! Notice that at the end of this corridor there's a stone in the wall that looks different from the rest. Might be something behind it, eh?



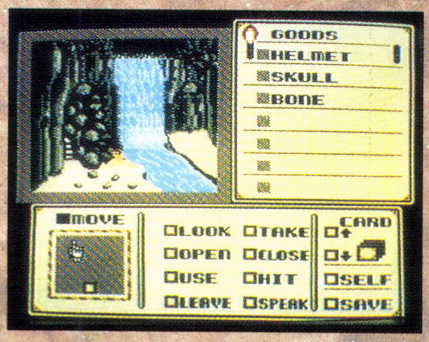
See the hole in the wall, to the right of the door? When a certain jewel is placed in the hole, it will make something valuable appear on the pedestal. You may not have found the jewels yet. If not, you'll have to come back here later.



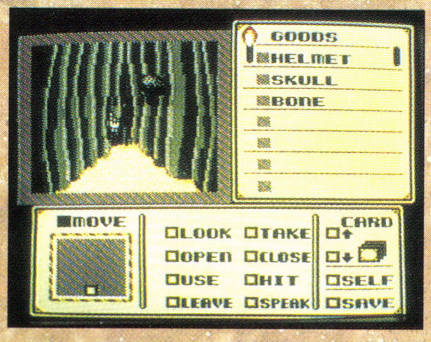
Keep getting fried by the dragon? One of the items here will protect you if you pick it up as soon as you enter the room.



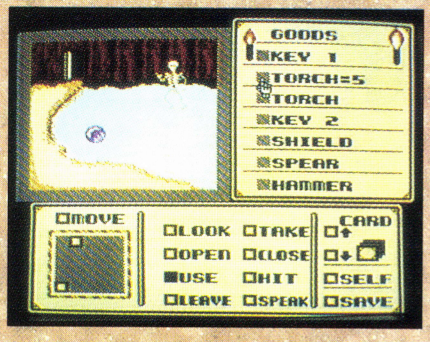
To secure the key, you must freeze the water with something cold.



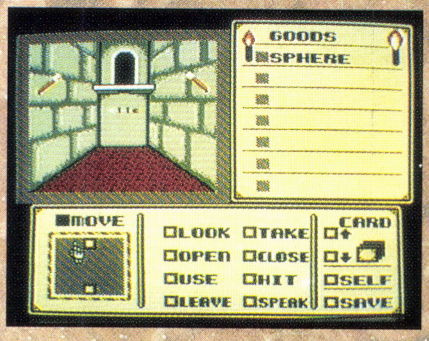
Don't bother trying to get past the landslide. It can't be accomplished. However, there is a secret room behind the waterfall. Pick up some rocks while you're here. You'll need them later.



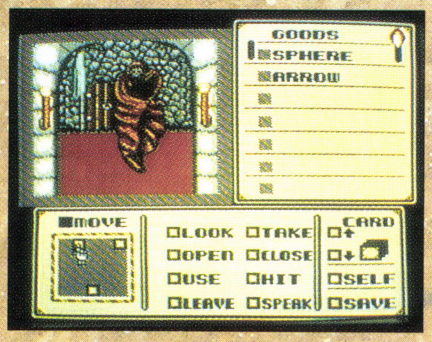
Something you want is hidden behind this rock on the wall.



To retrieve items from the frozen lake, melt the ice with a torch.



Remember the hall with the book? This secret room is behind a rock at the end of the hall. You can't take the torches with you. However, if you fiddle with the torch on the left, you'll get a surprise. Before leaving this room, take the arrow. Don't bother with the opening above the arrow. You can't reach it.

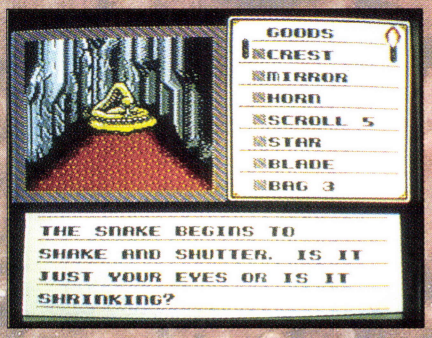


Yikes! This wraith sure looks mean. You should have a special torch in your inventory. Use it to send this wraith back to the netherworld. Before you leave here, take the torches and the cloak.



You can cross the left-hand bridge easily enough. The one on the right, however, won't support your weight. If only you could make yourself lighter. Maybe something in a jar can help.

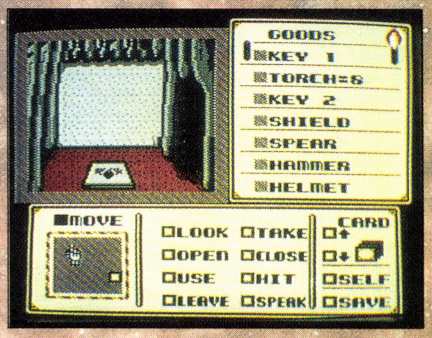




You need a special wand to handle this slithery cave dweller. If you don't have the wand, come back here later.

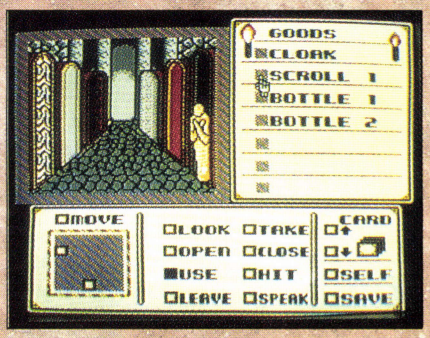


Take all the stuff on the shelf and the torch too. Examine the rear wall. Might be something back there.

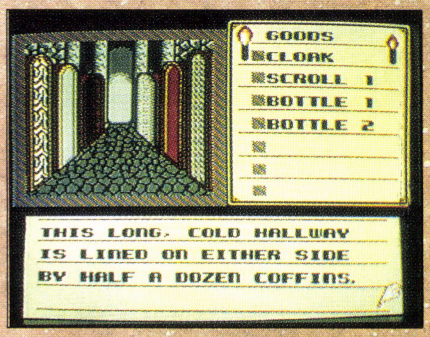


Place the correct jewel in the panel on the floor. An important personage will pay you a visit.

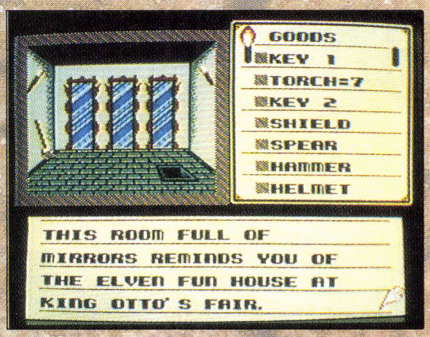




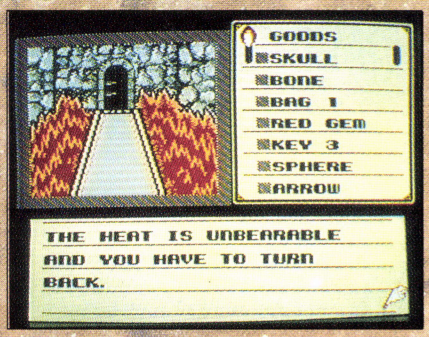
Just for the fun of it, open the first coffin on the left. But leave the second coffin closed, or your path will be blocked by deadly slime. Open the first two coffins on the right. There are surprises within.



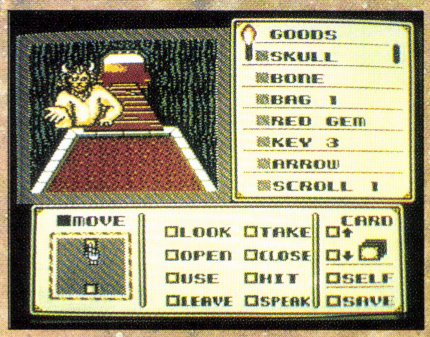
Just a mummy? I'll bet this creature's wrappings are highly combustible.



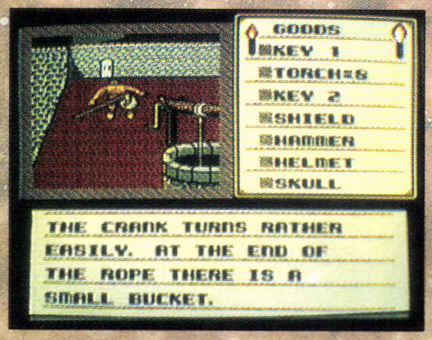
Take the broom and the torches. Then, using the hammer, break a mirror. But which one? If you choose incorrectly, your adventure will come to an abrupt end.



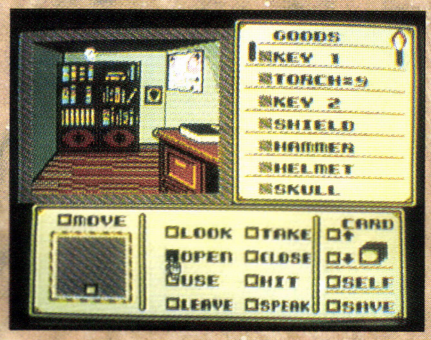
Put on the cloak before entering this room. Then throw something cold into the flames.



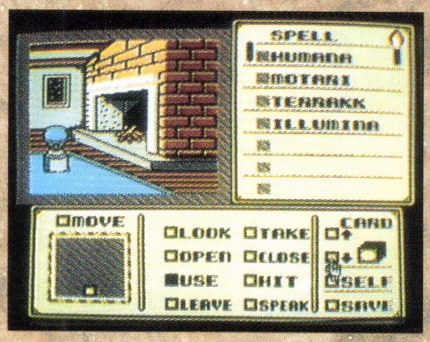
Paying the troll will get you nowhere. The first time over this bridge, throw your spear at him. After that, whenever you need to cross this bridge, use a certain magic spell.



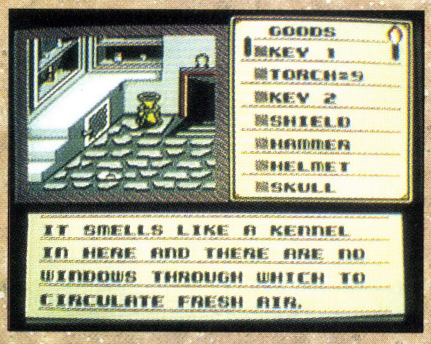
Use your sling on this guard. When he's down, finish him off with the sword. Bring up the bucket from the well. There's something in it.



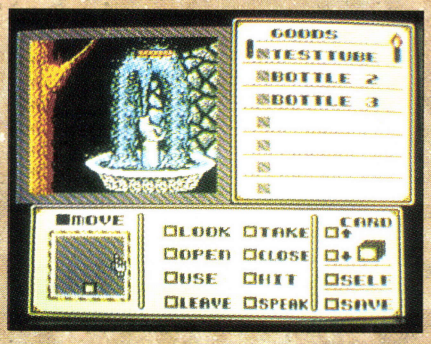
Some of the books in the bookshelf make interesting reading. You must be wearing glasses to read the book on the desk. What glasses? Have you looked in the desk yet? When you're finished with the books, place a jewel in the hole next to the bookshelf.



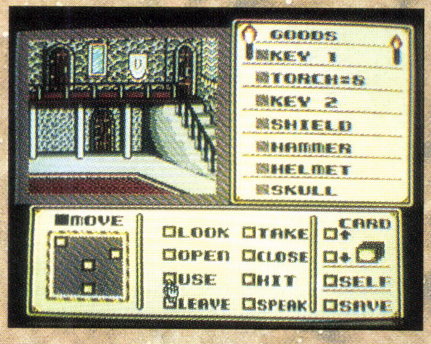
Take everything you can from this room. A magic spell will open the globe and produce another key.



Take all the bottles from the shelf and the horseshoe from above the small door. See the small handle on the floor? Lift that rock to find something important.



In order to retrieve the flute, put on the gauntlet. Before leaving this room, make sure you play the flute.



Take the mirror and the coat of arms. Each of the doors here opens with a key. By the way, rugs, just like mummies, are combustible.



Look out! It's the hellhound! Holy water will take care of this killer canine. Get the horn.

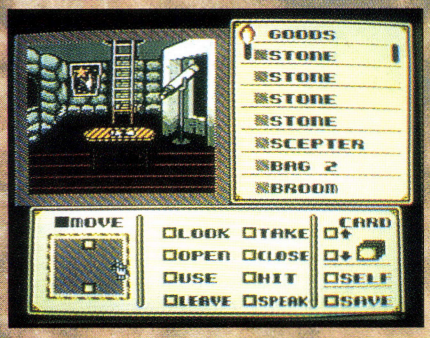


Throw a star at the dragon.

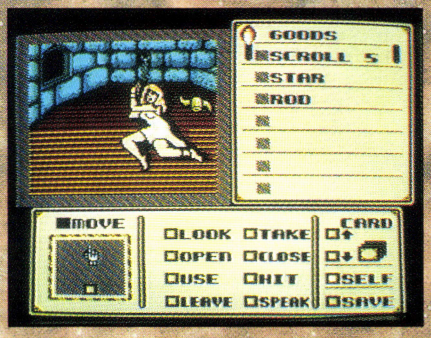




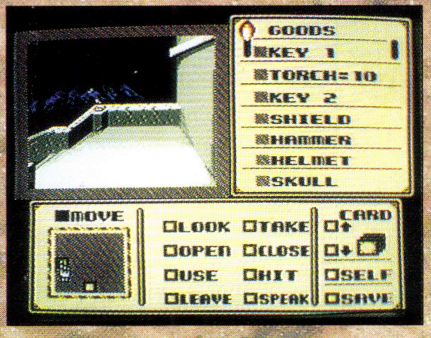
To get past the sphinx, you must correctly answer a riddle by giving him the proper item. The items you need are the map from the library, the horseshoe from the laboratory, the bellows from the study, the skull from the dragon's cave, the mirror from the banquet hall and the broom from the mirror room. See the markings on the steps? Write them down. It's a code that you'll need later.



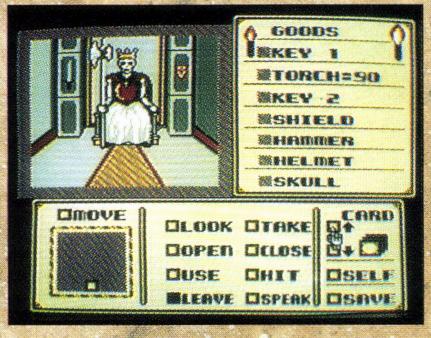
The star on the map here does nasty things to dragons. Look behind the map too, and don't forget the scroll on the table.



She may be beautiful, but she's also deadly. A silver arrow will teach her a little humility.



Place a rod in the thing that looks like a flagpole mount. When lightning strikes, a mystery will be revealed.



Put the right object in the king's empty hand, and a secret panel will open. Place a ring in the panel.

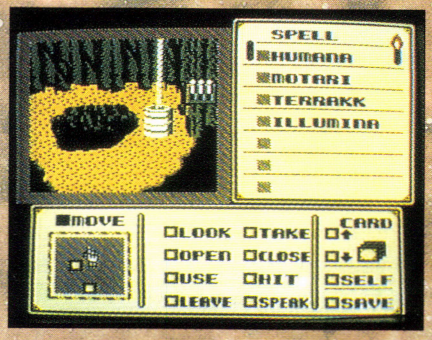


A certain magic spell will blind the guardians here.

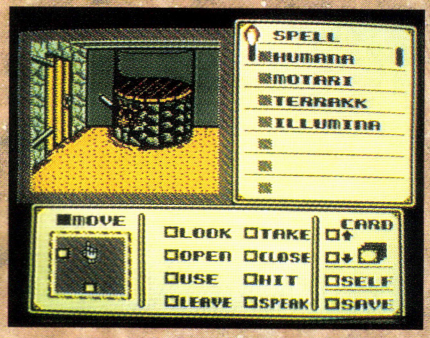


You need magic here too.





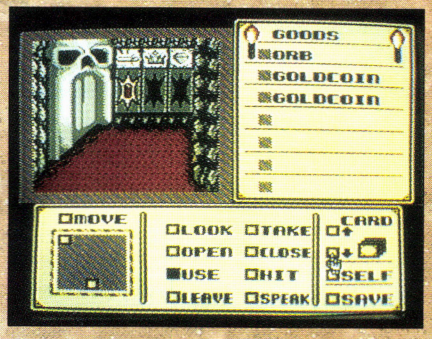
Now's the time to use the code you found in the riddle room. Set the three levers according to the code.



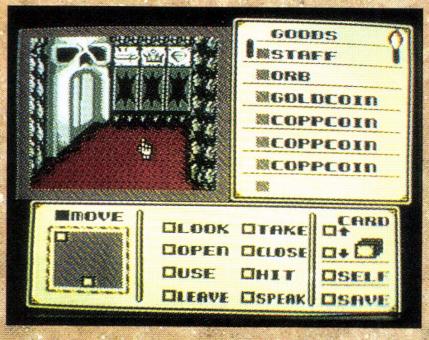
When thrown into the well, a certain coin will help your passage.



Bang the gong. You'll be greeted by this specter on a raft. Pay him well; then climb aboard.



Place the right object in the opening below the sword.



When the object is in place, play the horn.





It's the Warlock Lord and the behemoth! You need the Staff of Ages in order to beat this dastardly duo. To create it, place on the staff two objects that the snake gave you.



Congratulations! You've won the game.



Vapor Trail

by Data East

Your blood races through your body as you open the throttle for takeoff. A city has been taken over by unknown forces. As a countermeasure, a network of powerful fighter planes have been built to recapture the city from both sea and air. But alas, the city of New York has gone quiet. It's up to you to stop these anonymous assailants.

Vapor Trail, by Data East, is a one- or two-player cooperative game that allows the second player to join in at any time. You control your fighter plane through the six rounds of play using an eight-way joystick. Having two buttons on both sides of the joystick gives left- and right-handed game players easy access to the fire and "roll over" buttons (more on this last feature in a second).

After you press the start button, you'll be given a chance to choose between three different fighters, each one with its own special characteristics. Silph is first of the three selections. It's a balanced fighter that has both strong firepower and speed. It shoots three lines of bullets straight ahead of you that fan out wider to five shots when you power-up. Next is Valkyrie. This is a heavy fighter with very strong firepower but is slow in flight compared to the other two. Valkyrie has two concentrated shots that, when fully powered-up, shoot two devastating fire blasts. Finally, there's Seylen, a light fighter with weak firepower but tremendous speed. As you power this fighter up, it will shoot forward and backward simultaneously. All three are good, but, in my view, Silph or Valkyrie are better-suited for most rounds. It all depends on your playing style as to which fighter to choose.

by Donn Nauert

Data East implemented a method of obtaining special weapons that few games have tried in the past. Most shooters that I remember have a designated plane that flies by which when shot will leave a weapon power-up for you to retrieve. Another method has the weapon power-up appear at certain points in the game, then float around the screen—inevitably you end up playing the "Ha, catch me if you can" game. *Vapor Trail* does have designated weapon planes, and the power-ups do float about the screen. Furthermore, the power-ups change between what weapon you can receive, but only when they are shot. Of course, when there is a lot of enemy activity on the screen, it can be difficult to get the weapon you want.

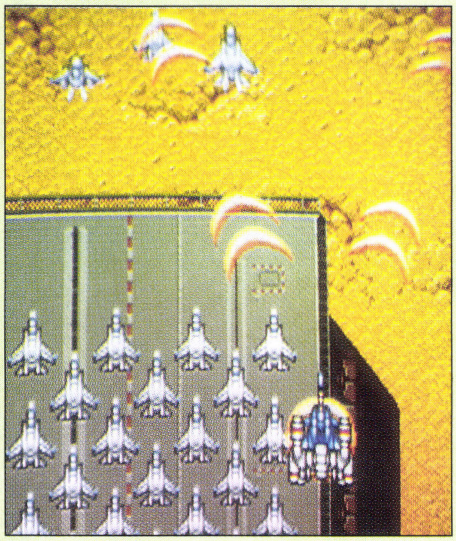
The weapon power-ups include: vulcan, which simply enhances your fighter's regular shots; bomber, which gives weapons like small shuttlecrafts; missile, a homing missile that's a good weapon to have (but you might find that there is too much of a delay between shots); and defender shots that fire globe missiles in all directions at the same time. While this last weapon can destroy most enemy shots, you still have to be on your guard, because the enemy's bullets tend to fly between yours.

Two other special power-ups are speed and power. Speed obviously gives your ship more mobility, while power gives you the ultimate in firepower. Once you have obtained the power item, there will be no need to obtain the other power-ups.

Finally, the roll-over feature I mentioned earlier is unique in itself. When implemented, it will give you temporary invincibility or will fire a smart bomb that annihilates everything on the screen. Once you've used the feature, it takes 26 seconds for you to build up to full power again, so you'll want to use roll over as a defensive weapon, for the times when things get a little out of hand.

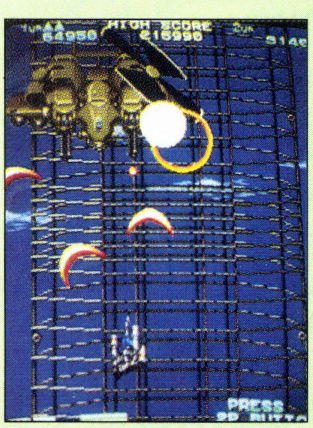
*You've already flown through the skyscrapers of Round 1 and the desert canyons of Round 2, but you begin to think to yourself,*Who are these guys?, Where do they come from? *and* Will this be the Cubbies year or what? *(Okay, maybe you only whisper two out of the three.) Suddenly, you look down and spot a huge war train rolling through a thick forest. You know your only chance for success is to swing in low and hit 'em hard. Welcome to Round 3.*

Graphically, *Vapor Trail* is, in a word, fantastic. The game has huge mini-bosses and level bosses that take up the entire screen of this vertical shooter. The shading gives depth to the canyons and trees and creates the impression that you are actually there, flying above





Data East's overhead shoot-'em-up, Vapor Trail



the action and watching the scenery go zooming by. The game has all the characteristics of a great shooter. It's got fast-paced action that's difficult but not difficult enough that you won't beat the game after some practice. I remember the days when a game had an ending, but would start over on round 1 with all your men still intact, when a person could play for hours and hours on a single quarter. Well, Data East has brought back that feature (absent in arcade games for a long time)—for *Vapor Trail* anyway—but we'll see if there are more of these games in the future. If you're into high-flying, nerve-wracking shooters, then *Vapor Trail* is for you.

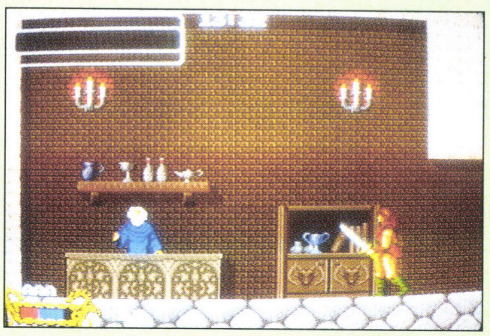


Cadash
by Taito

The King has summoned the mightiest warriors in the land, for he has a special adventure in store for them. And you.

You enter the castle and find yourself among other elite soldiers kneeling before the King. "Alas, brave warriors, Barrog has captured my daughter, the Princess Sarasa. Can ye brave souls bring happiness back to thy kingdom?," he asks. "It shall be done," you reply. And before you know it, you're on the adventure of a lifetime.





Cadash, Taito's multiplayer, role-playing game

Cadash, by Taito, is a one- to four-player game (if you're one of the lucky few who have access to games networked with the Taito Communication System) in which you control your character through various stages in search of the Princess Sarasa. You use a standard eight-way joystick to control your character, as well as two buttons: one for your weapon (and/or magic, if your character is able to cast spells) and one for jumping. *Cadash* also has a continue feature.

Once you begin the game, you'll be given the opportunity to choose one of four characters, each with his own characteristics and abilities to use certain items. The fighter has the best attacking power and is considered to be the best character for first-time players. He can't use magic, but by using his shield, he can block most items shot at him. He can also utilize a variety of swords and armor.

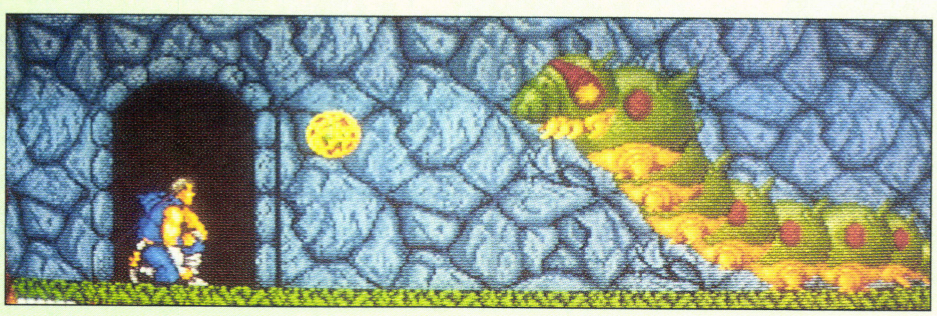
The second character is the magician. What the magician lacks in physical strength, he more than makes up in magical powers. This is the character the more experienced *Cadash*ers turn to, especially during a multiplayer game. In fact, most multiplayer games tend to have at least one fighter and one magician. With the fighter leading the way, he can block the shots of the enemies the magician didn't get with his magic.

The priest's main asset is her defense powers. Though she doesn't pack a powerful punch, she can take a beating and still make it out unscratched. Finally, the ninja relies mainly on his quickness to get out of most situations, and he can throw a variety of knives offensively.

Whether you're trekking through the thick forest or running through the castle, you'll likely come across one of the many shops. In the weapon shops you'll be able to outfit your character with the latest in weapons, such as the butterfly knife for the ninja, and armor fashion, like a cloak for the magician. If your character is starting to look a little weary, stop off at the inn and get a good night's rest. At the tool shop you'll find all you need to regain health (through potions) during battles or open those specially colored doors (with special keys).

There are two things of concern to all characters: experience points and gold. After defeating certain enemies you'll automatically receive experience points, which determine how much magic your character knows and how much life force your character has. The higher the number of experience points your character has, the more more magic and life they can use. Bags of gold are also left by most enemies. Use the gold to your advantage by purchasing as many medical herbs, which recover ten hit points, and as much extra time as you can. Use the extra time, preferably at the beginning of the game, to build your experience points.

As you're playing, remember to follow every pathway and look for hidden objects and





openings. Whenever you hear a sharp metal sound but there appears to be nothing there, it will more than likely be a hidden item such as a medical herb. There are also hidden openings that contain special items, so explore. If you constantly use the magician's magic, it will get stronger, whereas the priest's magic will be depleted.

(Have you ever noticed that when your character gets hit, regardless of direction, he'll always get thrown backward? Simply turn your back when you're about to get hit, and you'll keep progressing forward.)

Cadash is visually superb. The detail in the characters and background is wonderful. I especially like the shadowing and how it gives a 3-D effect, such as you get with the torches in the castles. Although the animation is a little choppy, the scrolling is excellent. There are a few highlights in the animation, like the hands that come out of the ground. As far as the music goes, it's not great but not terribly bad either.

The playability in *Cadash* is great, basically what you would expect in a role-playing game. It's an excellent player's game, as opposed to being a quarter thief. Even though there's a timer designed to keep you moving, you're still capable of buying enough time at the tool shop to make it through any of the sections. This is one fun game, especially with multiplayer or switching characters each time you play. Don't wait for the home version.



American Sammy's hilarious D.J. Boy.

D.J. Boy
by American Sammy

So, you think you have the baddest boom box in town. Well, a gang of thugs seems to agree with you. They like it so much, in fact, that they've stolen it from you. But now it's time to get back what is rightfully yours.

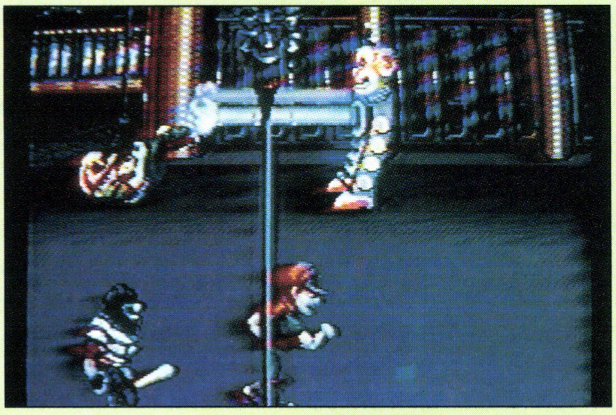
In American Sammy's *D.J. Boy* you'll use an eight-way joystick to control D.J. as you travel over bridges and past trolley cars in San Francisco, through cactus and tumbleweed in the Southwest and into the subways of New York as you battle to get your boom box back from the vicious gang. Besides the joystick there are three buttons set in a triangular formation to help you jump, kick and punch. (When combined, you can also use different moves.)

There are a few things that make *D.J. Boy* different from other arcade games; two details you'll notice immediately, another is not so apparent. The first thing you'll realize is that your character, as well as most of the enemies on-screen, are cruising around on roller skates. The programmers were able to capture the motions of roller skating beautifully. The second thing you'll pick up on is the digitized voice of an American legend, that of Wolfman Jack, who will shout words of encouragement and disapproval as you play. And, finally, if you look closely at the instructions, you'll see the phone number for the game counselors at American Sammy [(213) 320-4434]. I can't remember ever seeing a phone number in an arcade game before.

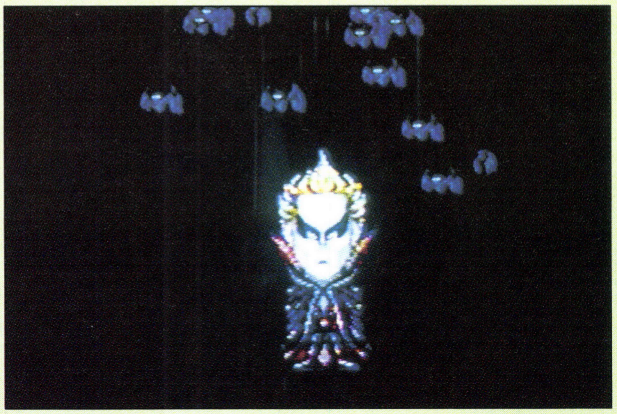
Using only your hands and feet as weapons, you'll come across a few "characters" in the game that make *D.J. Boy* different. You don't find too many male dancers bopping around most arcade games. For that matter, you rarely go up against rock-band members using their instruments as weapons or big, dangerous women that do something we won't mention (you'll have to play the game to find out what they do).

D.J. Boy possesses good graphics overall, but I especially like the detailed backgrounds. Instead of having plain walls or simple venues, American Sammy added posters and other items to help make them stand out. The skating motions found in the game, as well as the other animations, are fantastic. The way the male dancer shrivels up like a popped balloon after you defeat him, for example, is great. Game play, controls and moves are a lot like those found in *Double Dragon*. If you like that type of game, you'll like this one.

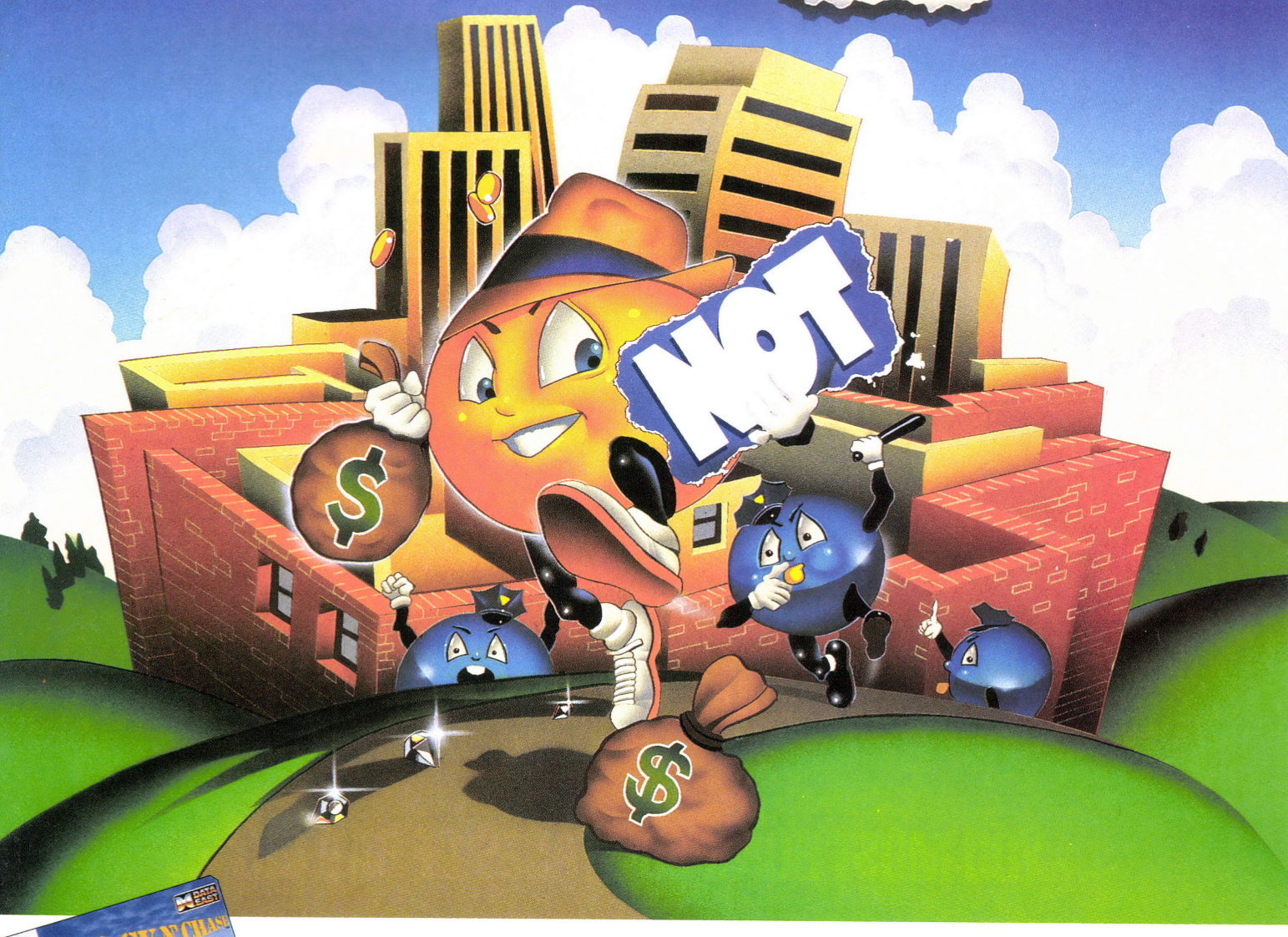
Unfortunately, *D.J. Boy* is a relatively short game that seems to be more of a money game than a player's game. Your character just doesn't have the stamina needed to get through this game on one or two quarters, regardless of how good you are or how much you have played the game before. He seems to go down a lot quicker and easier than the enemies, despite a constant pounding on his part. Just the same, the bottom line is, once you put a quarter in the slot, you'll be hooked.

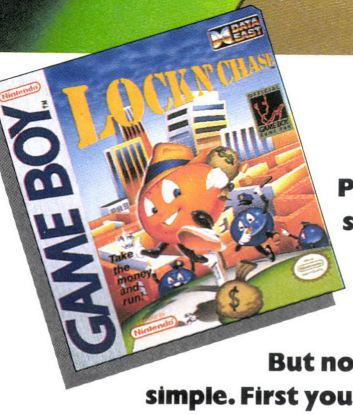


Wolfman Jack talks you through your various rollerskating battles.



CRIME DOES NOT PAY

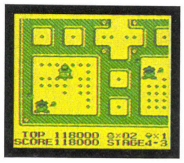


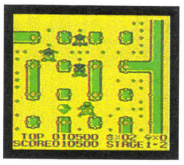


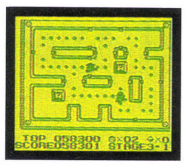
Payday has arrived! The streets of this city are lined with cash and filled with diamonds. All yours for the taking.

But not so fast. It's not that simple. First you've got to find the loot. And that's not all. You've got to be fast. *Very* fast. Because the police are right behind you. And they're out to do what the Boys in Blue do best—stop you cold.

Each street is a surprise, and no two routes are the same. You'll need all your skill to make it through multiple mazes, each one completely different and more challenging than the last. Expect some nonstop action through six a-maze-ing levels of play!







Lock N' Chase™ is certain to get your Game Boy humming. You'll be scooping up bucks, running mazes, and ditching cops for hours. If you're good enough, you *might* make a clean getaway.

LICENSED BY Nintendo GAME BOY

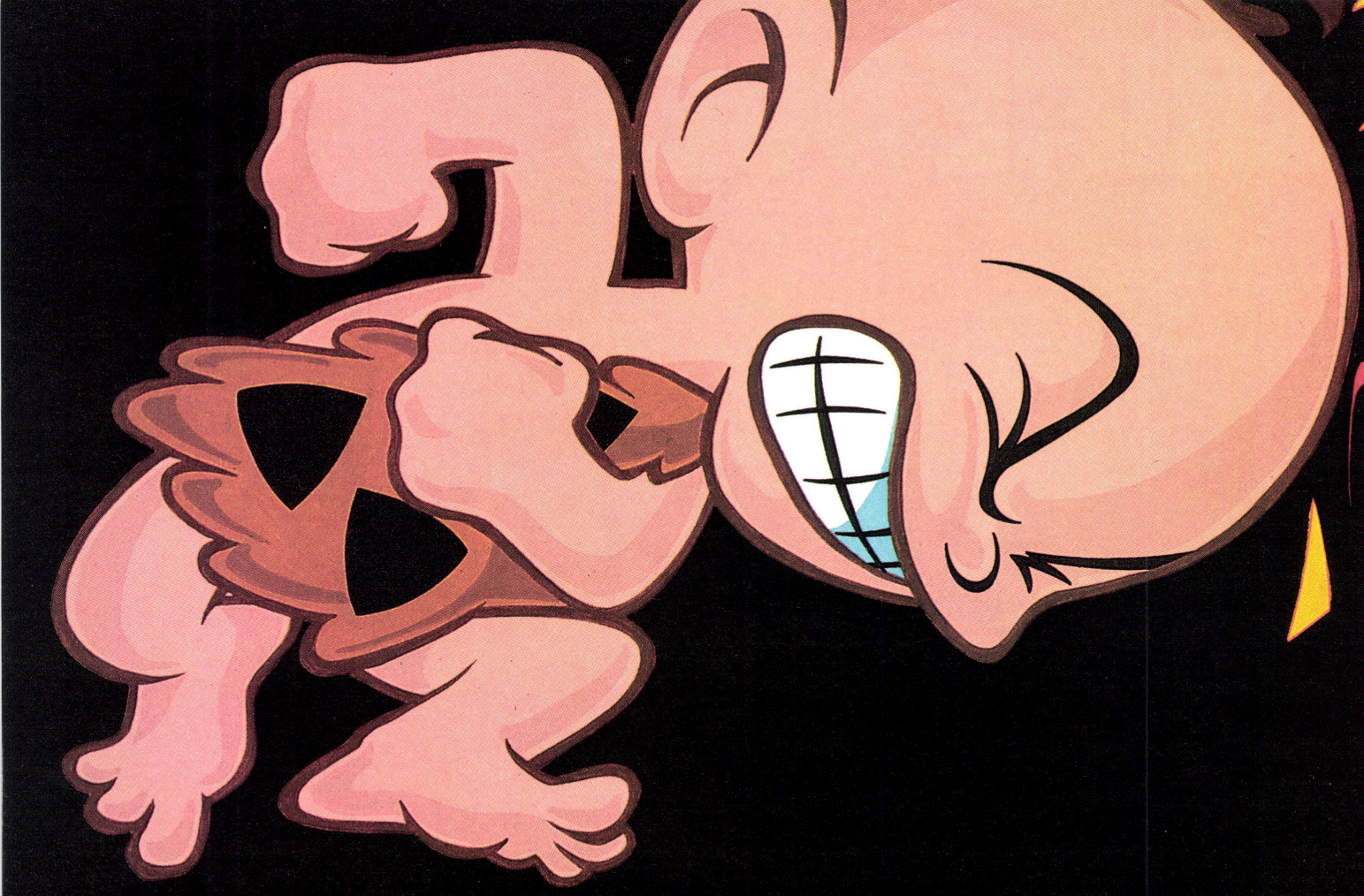
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CIRCLE #137 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



IT'S 10,000 YEARS AGO.

YOU MUST BONK 28 STAGES OF BAD GUYS

TO RESCUE YOUR PRINCESS.

AND YOU'VE ONLY GOT 1 WEAPON.

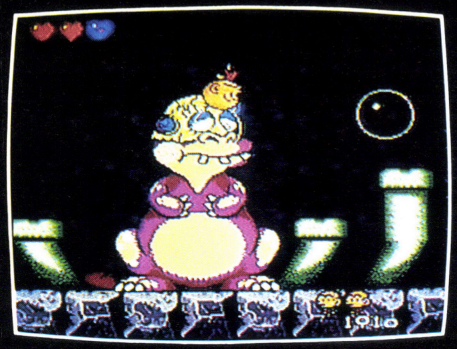
PREPARE TO BUTT HEADS.

You live in a world of prehistoric swamps, tropical forests and stone age deserts. Humongous dinosaurs, primordial gators and various other slimies, beasties and creepies roam at will.

And the bad news is, evil King Drool has kidnapped the Princess Za (a most excellent-looking babe.)

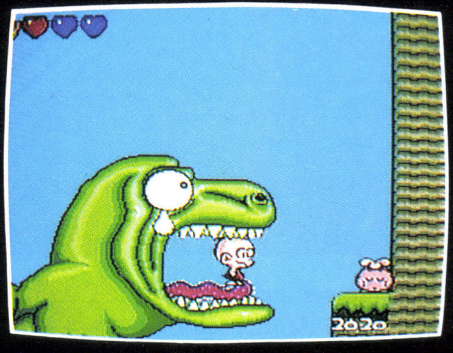
As Bonk, the heroic young Neanderthal head-banger, you will now embark on an epic quest through five levels of monstrous foes to rescue your princess. But there's just one catch. The only weapon you can take with you is your head.

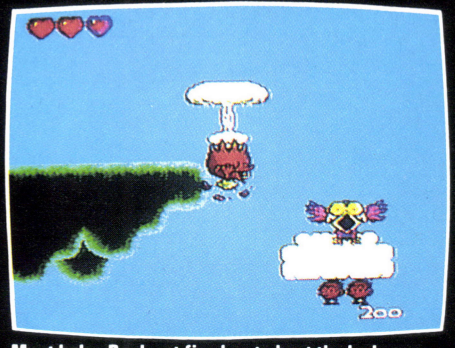
BONK'S ADVENTURE



As Bonk, you must battle Huey, the first Boss. Huey is hypnotized, so he forgets he's really your friend. Just keep bonking him on the head to jog his memory.

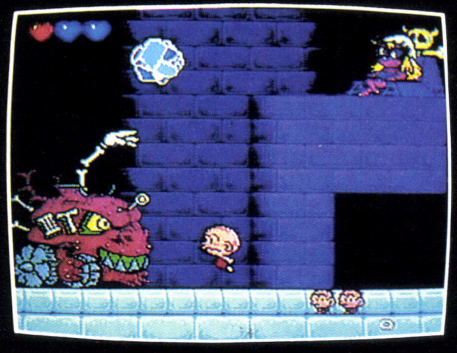
Look for more lives inside the dinosaur. Also remember to check every cave entrance and bonk all walls to find secret bonuses.

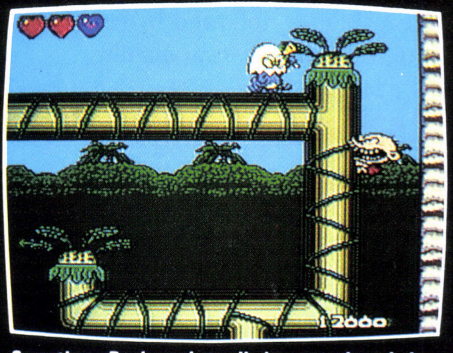




Meat helps Bonk get fired up to beat the bad guys. Like all fast food, you never know when you'll come across it, so keep your eyes peeled.

A most heinous boss, Tractor Head, has a deadly beanball fight with Bonk. You can beat him, just use your head.





Sometimes Bonk needs to climb to get where he's going. Since they hadn't invented the ladder in 10,000 B.C., he uses his teeth.

TURBO 16 GRAFX

NEC

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CIRCLE #138 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Genesis and TurboGrafx-16 Take on



Computer Art by Catherine Rundell Dunn

A TECHNICAL OVERVIEW

The Biblical Genesis details the beginning of the creation process. The "Genesis Device" of *Star Trek* fame was constructed with the goal of "creating life from lifelessness." In our world, Genesis means the creation of a 16-bit gaming console—a tool that renders gamers' fantasy worlds with much more clarity and beauty than before.

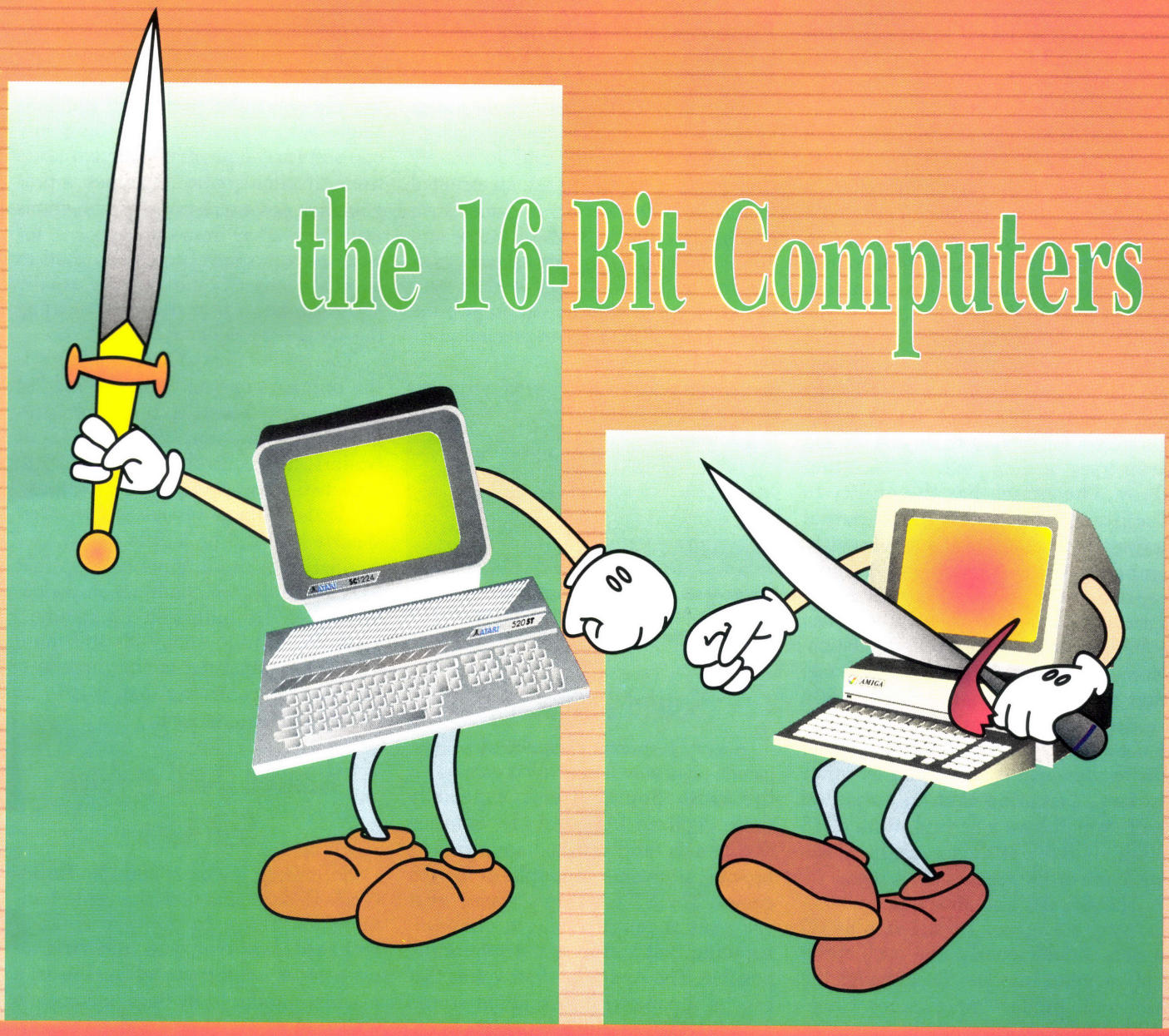
But let us not forget the TurboGrafx-16 system: Even though it uses a hybrid 8-bit processor, it employs a 16-bit graphics chip to create high-quality visuals. There are those of you who are not yet convinced of the power and advantages of the Genesis and TG-16 consoles. This comparison between these two video-game systems and two of the most popular 16-bit home computer/game systems, the Atari ST and Commodore Amiga, should provide some food for thought. The first part of the article is devoted strictly to hardware capabilities, followed by comparisons of software and its availability.

Apples and Oranges... or Are They?

When comparing hardware, the reader must realize that the home computers mentioned here do have modes of operation available that are not normally used for games. Only those modes directly related to games will be discussed. If you need a tool that will allow you to do programming, word processing, database, spreadsheets or video applications, then by all means get yourself a computer. But if you are considering the purchase of a home computer just to play games, be prepared to pay at least three times as much as current game consoles cost—and get similar results.

So, for would-be 16 bit gamers who are not sure which way to go, I'll begin with the graphic capabilities of home computers. The Atari ST and Commodore Amiga are both regularly programmed for games in the "low-resolution" mode, which displays a screen 320 pixels by 200 pixels. The Genesis screen is 320 by 224, while the TG-16 possesses a standard screen resolution of 256 by 216.

the 16-Bit Computers



by Frank Eva

The Amiga offers a mode referred to as "overscan," which fills the border area of the screen with graphics, not just color. The Atari ST is not capable of this feature. The TurboGrafx-16 supports overscan, but most early releases did not take advantage of this higher resolution (320 x 224). Actually, NEC programmers have discovered a method that will allow severe overscan, but the limits (approximately 400 lines) mentioned were well beyond the capabilities of standard monitors, making this function an oddity without purpose. While Sega's technical people were reluctant to admit that the Genesis can do overscan, I haven't seen a single Genesis title that didn't fill the screen to the limits of the monitor.

In the low-res mode, the ST is capable of displaying 16 colors simultaneously from a palette of 512. (There are software programs that "kludge"— the hacker's term for a nontraditional programming method—to permit simultaneous use of the entire ST palette.) The Amiga allows use of 32 colors from a palette of 4,096. The TurboGrafx's best feature is that it lets programmers use 256 colors out of its 512-color palette, rivaling the VGA graphics mode on IBM PCs. From the Genesis palette of 512 colors, 64 can be displayed at one time. For games, a palette of 512 colors is certainly sufficient. The number of colors that can be displayed simultaneously is a paramount issue; it determines the potential quality of the artwork. Genesis' and TG-16's color usage allow for sufficient shading of the characters and backgrounds, handily beating out either home computer.

Character Development

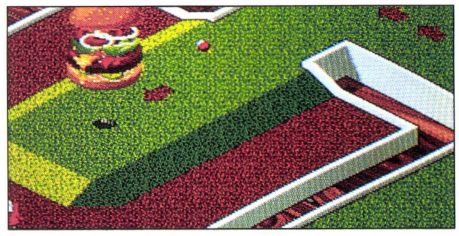
When speaking of the characters that are controlled by the computer or the human behind the joystick, we are actually talking about "sprites," a programming term given to small blocks of memory that result in objects (characters or items) moved around on the screen. This is much the same as the layering method used to make cartoons, where a background is created as one layer, and objects and characters are placed on top of the background to be

altered or positioned independently. This method is easier and takes less time—the latter factor being an important consideration in making a smoothly animated video game—than having to re-create each frame from scratch. Once sprites are created, not only can they be moved and animated on-screen easily, but their position and collision status (whether a character is in contact with a bullet or another character) can be kept track of simply.

The ST has no hardware capabilities relative to sprites, animation, collisions, etc. This doesn't mean that the ST can't play games; it just means that the programmers must build these objects and keep track of them with software routines. The Amiga has the ability to simultaneously access eight virtual sprites (vsprite) per scan line, plus eight four-color hardware sprites. While the vsprites are slower than hardware sprites, the number of colors is determined by the current screen limitation. Now, if my mathematics still serve me, that would be a maximum of 1600 vsprites, simultaneously. However, that is not a practical figure, because many of the sprites would be hidden by other sprites. Assuming that an animated sprite would have a vertical width of 16 pixels, we arrive at a more realistic working figure of 100 vsprites per screen.

The Genesis also possesses a powerful sprite engine. It can display 80 sprites simultaneously, and each sprite can use up to 16 colors. So, although the Amiga can produce more sprites, Genesis' hardware sprites can be rendered just as realistically and can be manipulated faster. While the TG-16's sprite engine seems slightly less capable with a maximum of 64 sprites per screen, an NEC spokesman stated that potential customers should be aware that the TG-16's sprites can be larger than Genesis' (a maximum of 32 x 64 for the TG-16 as opposed to Genesis' 32 x 32).

A Genesis feature that has no Amiga hardware equivalent is "sprite scaling." This allows for rapidly and accurately changing the size of sprites, an essential feature in 3-D perspective games such as *Thunder Blade*, *Galaxy Force* and *Space Harrier*. As you get "closer" to or "farther away" from an object, it's easy to have a sprite alter its size to give the appearance of a change in proximity.



The Genesis version of Zany Golf by Electronic Arts, perfectly mimics all aspects of its computer-game predecessor.

Sound Judgement

A very important aspect of arcade games (and now home video gaming) is the audio. Sound effects, especially those digitized from real life, enhance the visuals, and musical soundtracks provide an overall atmosphere for the games. The ST has three "voices" that are sent through a single channel, meaning that stereo is not inherently possible. The Amiga has four voices that can be separated for excellent stereo sound. NEC's machine supports stereo, but a $34 adapter (the TurboBooster) or the $400 TurboGrafx-CD player is necessary to hear it. The Genesis has nine-voice stereo sound, so it is capable of even greater audio detailing. To take advantage of the Genesis' stereo capability, the player can use headphones or hook into a home stereo system.

Peripherals are also a subject for concern. Both the ST and Amiga employ a mouse as the primary input device. The mouse has two function buttons but is not generally recognized as a game peripheral, is inherently fragile, requires frequent cleaning and is expensive to replace. Most games are programmed to use the controller ports with standard single-button joysticks, providing only one software-dependent function aside from direction control. At times, a programmer desperate for other functions will utilize a key from the keyboard; for instance, the space bar can be used to launch a smart bomb. This is usually awkward, because it requires releasing the joystick momentarily.

The revolutionary Genesis joystick is the only one currently on the market that supports access to three software-dependent functions. (The NEC controllers, like controllers for the NES, have two software-dependent buttons). While the Genesis version of *Forgotten Worlds* may still be a little awkward—compared to the original coin-op that uses a 360-degree combination paddle controller/fire button and a standard eight-direction joystick—it's still more effectively translated to the three-button Genesis controller than it is to its dual-button counterpart.

Wanted Dead or Alive: Software

So, overall, Genesis and the TurboGrafx-16 do well as dedicated entertainment machines. In the real world of software, however, you may find an even more important advantage in a machine produced by Sega, a company with many years of experience in creating video games.

The main problem with current video-game consoles is software availability. Not discounting the rapidly growing TurboGrafx-16 library, the ST and Amiga form only niche markets in the U.S. computer industry. Because of the huge installed user base, most software begins its life here in the IBM PC format and may be converted for use on the more capable 16-bit home machines later. However, most of these titles are not enhanced to take advantage of the superior capabilities of such machines. Since neither Atari Corp. nor Commodore Business Machines produce their own game software, owners of these systems are at the mercy of third-party software publishers.

The few houses that program specifi-

continued on page 107

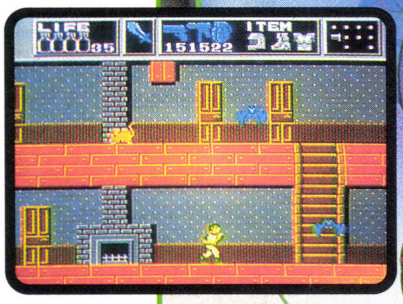
PRODUCT COMPARISON:
16-Bit Game Consoles vs. 16-Bit Home Computers

ATTRIBUTE	GENESIS	ATARI ST	AMIGA	NEC TG-16
microprocessor	68000	68000	68000	HU6820†
maximum screen resolution	320 x 224	320 x 200	320 x 200	256 x 216
—with overscan	No	No	384 x 240	320 x 224
palette of available colors	512	512	4,096	512
# of colors per screen	64	16	32	256
# of sprites per screen	80	n/a	100 (app.)	64
# of colors per sprite	16	n/a	32	16
supports stereo sound	Yes*	No	Yes*	Yes*

† — custom-supercharged 8 bit
* — with adapter, headphones or home stereo

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continued from page 104

cally for the ST or Amiga are niche publishers. Their programmers are either devoted hobbyists or barely eke out an existence. Illegal copying, on a percentage basis, affects the smaller markets more drastically. Consequently, the best programmers, who have built reputations for their quality games, frequently leave this sector of the market bound for more fertile pastures. Or, they may decide to give up the hard work of programming in favor of publishing the work of other programmers, who are themselves just starting to build a reputation. This state of flux puts software development in a kind of limbo. Improvements are not made in the overall quality of the software. The best (and frequently the most complicated) features of computers are rarely used to their full advantage.

In a related manner, the same disadvantages mentioned above particularly affect Amiga game development. In Europe, notably West Germany, France and the United Kingdom, where most dedicated 16-bit computer software begins, the ST continues to be the most popular system. (West German game development is further limited by unique government restrictions on software that might be construed as violent.) Consequently, the majority of new game software is produced in the ST format, then ported over to the Amiga without significant enhancement. Amiga buyers are frequently left with software that does not perform to that machine's potential. Yes, Sega has produced versions of arcade games for these home computers too; this software has not always performed closely enough to the original coin-op games to receive rave reviews. This is because Sega has also allowed the same processes already mentioned to affect its line of computer software, specifically, the assigning of third parties to do much of their own development and quality control.

Enter the Genesis! In an informal interview with Don Nolan, technical supervisor for Sega of America, Nolan stated that the aforementioned problems will not happen with Genesis software. Sega has hired its own staff of experts to oversee development of all Genesis titles.

Finally, Sega's exposure in the arcades is a factor that may make the Genesis even more popular than proposed 16-bit machines like Nintendo's Super Famicom, because Genesis titles will have instant recognition going for them. (Nintendo isn't the force in the arcade industry that it used to be.) Sega won't have the added expense of needing to purchase a lion's share of license agreements in order to satisfy the user thirst for new games. This should translate into a larger profit margin for Sega, which could be translated into benefits for the owners of Genesis machines; i.e., new peripherals, more and better software and even new and more powerful gaming platforms!

Over the long haul, it's my opinion that Genesis is the system that will produce the most realistic arcade conversions, though it's not out of the question that NEC will unveil some fantastic creations for the TG-16. Sega's hardware is capable of many good things, and its support team is devoted to producing games that truly take advantage of the machine's capabilities. Although Genesis may never dominate the marketplace, it will take a large chunk of the action, as more and more people become aware of the advantages of 16 bits over 8 bits of computing power.

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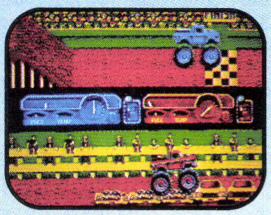
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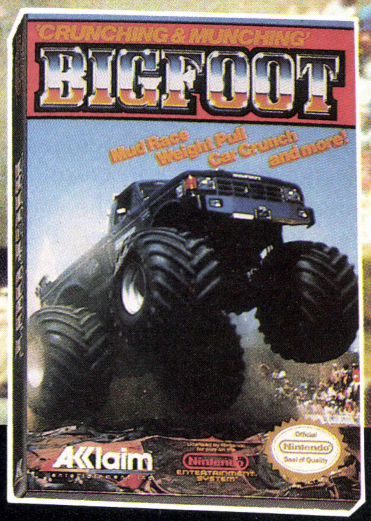


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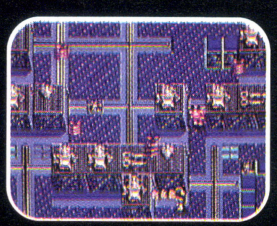
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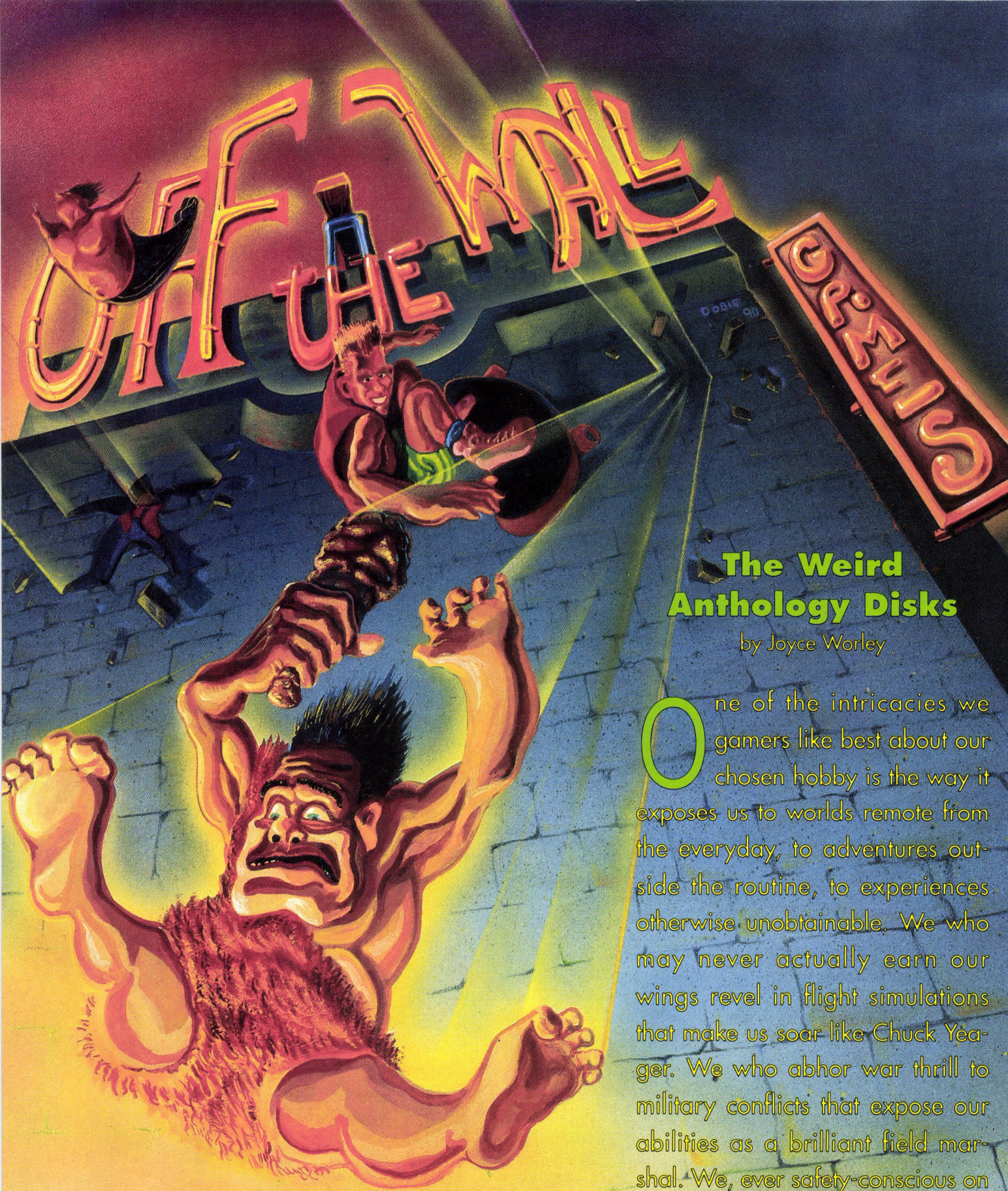
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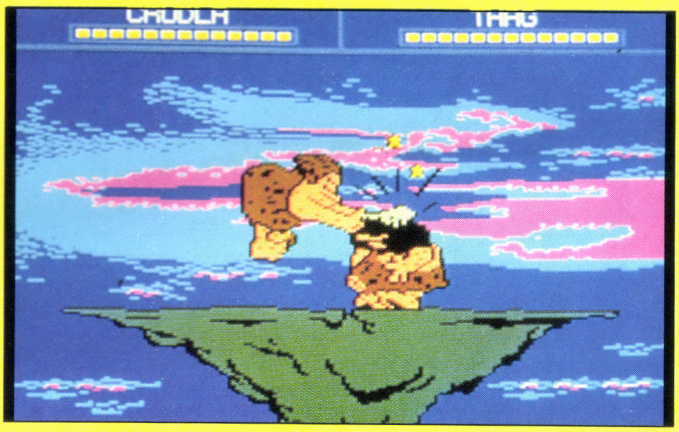
The Weird Anthology Disks

by Joyce Worley

One of the intricacies we gamers like best about our chosen hobby is the way it exposes us to worlds remote from the everyday, to adventures outside the routine, to experiences otherwise unobtainable. We who may never actually earn our wings revel in flight simulations that make us soar like Chuck Yeager. We who abhor war thrill to military conflicts that expose our abilities as a brilliant field marshal. We, ever safety-conscious on the highways and byways, rev our engines then roar through raceways with motors smoking.

Olympic contests provide computerists opportunities they never had to dive skate, run and jump—and win medals for their mettle. Few computer gamers can ever aspire to Olympian stature; not many who read these words will win the goal, much less the gold. But the *experience* of superiority is ours when we emerge victorious in these simulations.

Epyx mined for Olympic metal with the outstanding series of *Games* disks and came out of the experience with more gold (plus silver and bronze) coins than the entire U.S. athletic team mustered in Seoul. This success inspired the programmers to plant their tongues in their cheeks and create another competitive disk. In doing so, they probably never realized that they were parenting yet another family of anthologies.



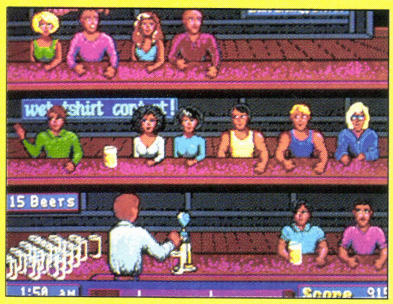
EA's Caveman Ugh-Lympics, *by Dynamix, is one of the wildest games to come down the pike, featuring such events as caveman clubbing and dinosaur vaulting.*

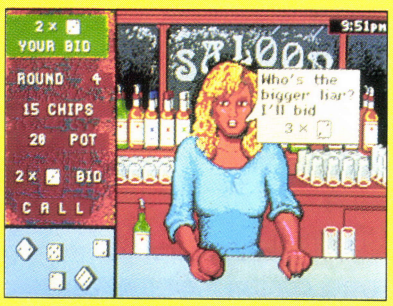
The Crazy Stuff Started in California

California Games (Epyx for most systems) uses the Olympic format in an anthology of six events considerably less sober than the previous hits in the Epyx *Games* line. Instead of mastering field sports for Olympic gold, eight competitors vie to be the baddest dudes (or dudettes) on the beach. The events are half-pipe skateboarding, foot bag, roller skating, surfing, BMX bike racing and the flying disk.

Each of the sports are reproduced with great fidelity. The skateboarder is required to complete a trio of stunts for points, including kick turns, aerial turns and the difficult hand plant. The foot-bag competition features a variety of possible moves strung together into difficult routines. Surfing is a beautiful construct; the gamer can ride the wave, perform difficult turns, then go over the top of the wave, in a fabulous re-creation of everything surf-related but the wet feet. Roller skating rewards fancy moves and aerial turns as the skater attempts to jump all obstacles.

The easiest event, the flying disk, is a Frisbee player's picnic. The bike-racing event is probably the most difficult. The peddler gets control of the bike on the track, leaping obstacles and doing wheelies, then takes off for the hills to compete on the ramps. Here the biker can, with some practice, complete in-the-air maneuvers.





Accolade's Bar Games *offers "adult" contests like last call and liar's dice.*

After California, Things Really Got Weird

California Games was the flagship of the funny sports fleet that followed. By comparison, the silly beach games didn't seem so odd at all.

DigiTek Software's *Western Games* (for the Amiga, Atari ST and Commodore 64) turned six highly unlikely events into a tournament of down-home skills for one or two players, using joystick or keyboard control. The most "ordinary" competition in the disk is arm wrestling. Two tough guys face each other across a table, as a handful of barflies ogle the action. The competition, in a gruesome display of good ol' American machismo, features burning candles placed on each side of the table, so the loser is bound to get hot.

Beer shooting is a straightforward competition: The two opponents get an opportunity to shoot beers out of the hands of village idiots holding them. A beating heart's "nervous" index at the top of the screen tracks the tension level; marksmanship becomes more accurate when the ticker is slower.

The next two competitions make the previous two seem, well, almost Olympian by comparison. Dancing may not strike you as a competitive sport, but in this event, the player must follow the woman's lead in a complicated pattern of steps. In the eating competition, the consumers each control a spoon, dipping stew, slurping it up, chewing, swallowing and drinking between mouthfuls.

ILLUSTRATION BY ARMAND BALTAZAR

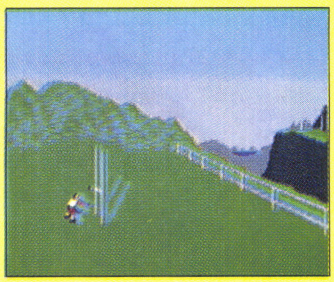
The final pair of contests in *Western Games* are just downright weird. Quid-spitting—yep, that's tobaccer chewin'!—requires each player to bite off a piece of electronic quid, chew it thoroughly, then spit (hopefully into the pot, but the other player's face is also a possible target). Milking requires moving the joystick rhythmically to correspond with the beat of the heaving udder on-screen.

The play action on this sextet is a little dubious. But the subject matter is humorous, and the on-screen graphics are cute. It's an unusual set of games; in fact, an unlikely set. No collector should miss it.

Time-Traveling Games

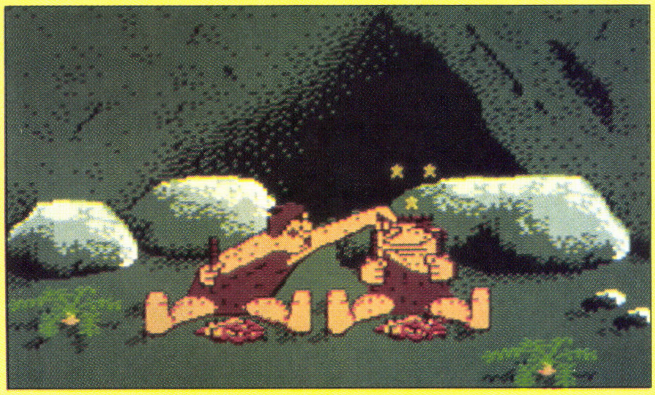
Western Games may seem strange, but it is based, more or less, on reality. Dynamix's *Caveman Ugh-Lympics* (Electronic Arts for the C-64 and IBM) is not hindered by that restriction. This anthology's six titles purport to be caveman sports, and the graphics are as funny as the concepts.

The events are wild: Clubbing sets one caveman against another, stick in hand—the object is to bash the other guy in the head. In dino vault the caveman plants his pole then soars over the prehistoric beast; a miss here gets your man gobbled by a big lizard.



Artworx's Highland Games *brings six strength events to the computer screen.*

The dinosaur race is a split-screen, two-person race. Each mastodon-mounting caveman must club his dino just enough to make him go fast, but not enough to make him balk.The saber-toothed tiger race also utilizes a split-screen technique, as the two competitors try to avoid becoming cat food. In fire-making, rubbing sticks together is the sport.



Watching each cartoon neanderthal in Caveman Ugh-Lympics *trying to be the first to build a fire is downright hilarious!*

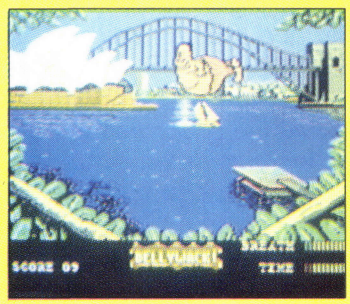
The last sport would get feminists in an uproar, were it not so absurdly funny. Mate toss puts the little lady's ankles in the mitts of a cave-dweller, who must swing her in circles to gain momentum, à la the hammer toss, then let go to see how far his babe will fly.

Mastertronic's *Knight Games* (for the Commodore 64 and IBM) is no joke; this is a serious disk of medieval sports. One player competing against the computer, or two players in one-on-one battles, faces off in eight events from the age of chivalry. The games feature derring-do and swashbuckling, as knights flail away at each other in two versions of sword fight, quarterstaff, archery, pikestaff, crossbow, ball & chain and axeman. A lively soundtrack of medieval-style music weds with the clash and clank of iron on iron, as players control their men with keyboard or joystick.

Knight Games' art is excellent; even the C-64 version is handsome, and the IBM version is really impressive. The fights are timed by an artfully burning candle, wax dripping down its side, and selective skill levels keep it interesting. This disk did great in old Blighty, where it was rated one of the England's best battle games. The computer opponent is very aggressive, and the set of "sports" is a real battleground of antique skills.

Other Lands, Other Games

Artworx's set of six games for the Commodore 64 is a tribute to Scotland's Celtic ancestors. *Highland Games* is a senary set of strength contests traditionally held in spring or summer in the northern highlands. A lively bagpipe concert accompanies the computer contests.





Mindscape's Aussie Games *gives computer gamers a "six-pack" of fun events, like the Sydney belly whack, from "down under."*

Highland Games is definitely more akin to Olympic sports than any of the other weird anthologies examined in this article. Tartan-kilted competitors vie in the hammer throw, long jump, caber toss, weight toss, discus and tug of war. (The tug is only playable by two gamers.)

Hammer throw is realistically

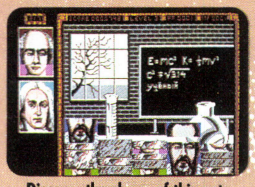
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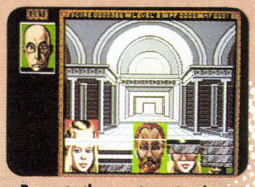
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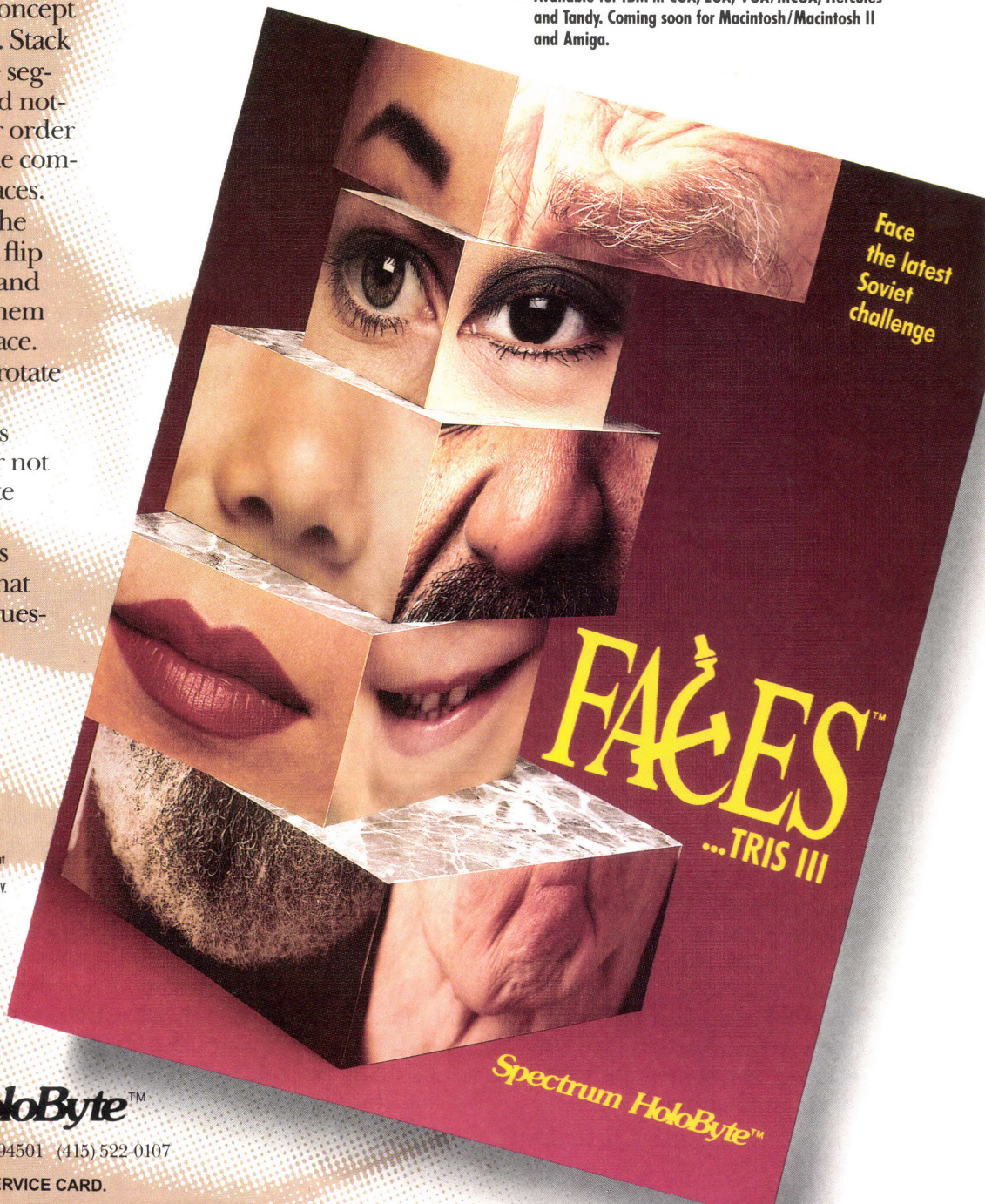
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implemented. The athlete must spin in a circle to gain momentum, then throw the hammer as far as possible. This is accomplished by moving the joystick first to the right, then counterclockwise.

Long jump requires a run to the jump line, then the vault. Caber toss, weight toss and discus use a series of joystick movements to build speed and fire. The tug of war sets two teams against each other with each player controlling an anchor man. On-screen athletes must always stay in sync with the computer players in order to be effective.

Each of the strength tests are reproduced using joystick control, through a combination of left-and-right moves, followed by the fire button to launch projectiles. The short documentation that accompanies the disk carefully describes each event and routines for success, so even complicated sequences are easy to learn.

The on-screen graphics were created by Supernova. Hardly a state-of-the-art product, *Highland Games* nonetheless presents an interesting collection of competitions (at a reasonable price) accompanied by a lovely soundtrack of Scottish pipes (haggis not included).

Aussie Games (Mindscape for the C-64) is a lot less serious, but beautifully implemented. The six-pack from "down under" allows four players to select a team mascot, practice the events and compete. The "sports" range from dubious to almost serious. The Sydney belly whack is a competition in which you try to create the biggest splash when jumping into the harbor. Melbourne beach footy is a kickball competition; kick the ball to your mate, and keep it away from your adversary. The score is based on the distance of the kick and the successful catch. The bush boomerang competition casts the player as an aborigine. Each player gets three chances to throw the boomerang and catch it.

The Ayers Rock dry river race is a peculiar event. The gamer (with a computer-animated partner) must carry a boat over his head as he runs down a dry river bed,



A barroom favorite, air hockey, is well represented in Accolade's Bar Games.

jumping and dodging animals and obstacles. Top-end beer shoot is an environmentalist's



Western Games, by DigiTek Software, lets you battle it out in such "sports" as cow milking and eating.

nightmare: a trash-shooting contest. As the on-screen hero stands in the bed of a truck with a shotgun, the driver and passenger take turns throwing empty bottles out the back. Each player gets 40 shots at 40 bottles, as the truck bounces down the road.

The final Aussie game is Cairns marlin fishing. This simulates the barebones of the sport by requiring the player to prepare for the cast by selecting line strength, then aiming and casting the lure. Next, when the fish strikes, the gamer must hook the marlin and reel it in.

All games take place against backgrounds of well-drawn Australian scenery, accompanied by native tunes. All require a moderate amount of skill. A well-written manual describes the routines for success and also presents quite a bit of information about the island continent, its slang and geography.

Games Grown-Ups Play

Accolade's entry in the *Games* anthology line is a compilation of events designed by Gene Smith, called *Bar Games* (for the IBM PC). Although many off-the-wall recreations are not notable for outstanding good taste, the five games in this set are so unusual that the package carries a sticker disclaimer: "Recommended for Mature Audiences." They are probably better characterized as "prankish" rather than offensive.

Up to four can compete, either in single events or in tournament mode, where high scores are saved to a vanity board. The games range from moderately serious to completely outrageous, and all are controlled by joystick or keyboard.

Liar's dice starts each player off with 100 chips and lets him or her wager against the well-heeled bartender. The object is to have the highest point value in your hand by having as many matching die faces as possible, when combined with the computer opponent's hand.

Last call is reminiscent of the old game *Tapper*. The bartender has a quota of suds to serve, and the object is to take the patrons' orders, then slide beer mugs down the bar to the proper persons, in the proper order. The

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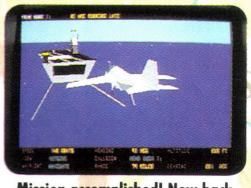
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game gets tougher as it progresses; the patrons drink more brew as the week passes, and the power bar that determines how far the beers slide becomes less accurate.

The fourth game is a barroom standard. An on-screen air hockey table comes with four opponents of graduated skill. Each must be defeated in two out of three rounds in order to move up to the next player. Points scored increase as the competition becomes more difficult.

The final two games are the ones that earned the game its "mature audiences" recommendation. Pick-up artist features three women to be chatted up over a period of four nights. The first challenge is to find the one who'll respond to a conversational gambit. The computer then poses three questions, each of which must be satisfactorily answered in order to meet the lady the next evening. The questions and a choice of answers are shown on-screen, and the player has 10 seconds to choose the response that, hopefully, will charm the lady into continuing the conversation.

Wet 'n' wild is a wet T-shirt contest; the object is to throw buckets of water onto the participants as they walk across the stage. The water must get each guy or gal at least 80% wet. Success at this venture produces yet another target. As the game progresses, contestants interfere by kicking over the buckets, and eventually an opponent drops weights on your head as you try to douse the person on-screen.

Bar Games features clever cartoons of beautiful people in an attractive barroom setting; the animation and design is up to the same standard that characterizes most games from Accolade. The only thing mature about them is the surroundings, and there is actually nothing offensive at all about this type of entertainment, but it is rather juvenile.

More Weirdness to Follow

The anthology of arcade action games, loosely bound together by a common theme, is now a standard format in the game industry. Far from the day when all such collections involved sporting competitions, they now have subjects as diverse as the minds of their creators.

It is therefore completely safe to predict that there will be more of these weird and wonderful collections of unusual activities. Off-the-wall games are a bona fide new category of entertainments that will certainly have many additional entries in the months to come.

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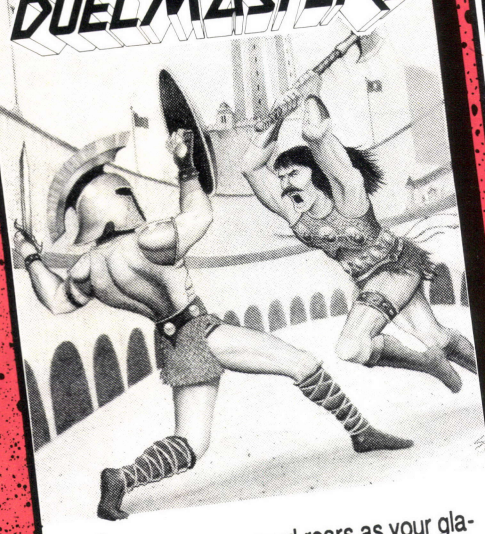
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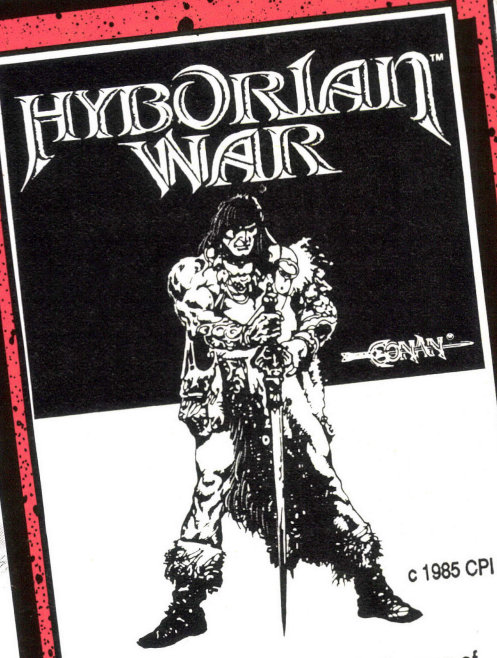
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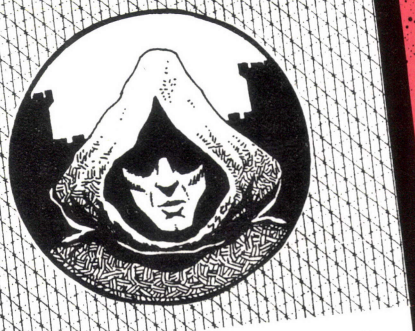
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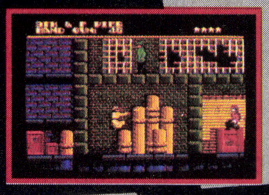
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All the Questions That Are Fit to Print

by the Game Doctor

Howdy game fans, the Doc is in. As usual, we've got a passel of probing questions in need of answers, so let's get right down to it!

question

I recently purchased *Double Dragon II* (Virgin Mastertronic) for my IBM. It is a good game overall. I have only one question: Is there a way to continue the game? It's a real pain to get far into it then die and have to start all over again. I hope you'll be able to help me.

—David Atkinson
Raleigh, North Carolina

answer

It's generally been the tradition in action/arcade games not to include a save-game option. There are a variety of reasons for this, and they range from technological (most of these programs are translated from the video-game format, where game save is not possible without the addition of a battery to the cartridge) to philosophical (the home game should mimic the arcade experience, where game save is not possible). The Doc believes, however, that all arcade games should, at the very least, feature milestone-based "bookmarks." In other words, once you pass a certain point, if your character dies, you don't have to start over again from the beginning, but from the last milestone or game level your player/character reached.

Another technique is to use passwords, a system that was employed successfully by games like *Blockbuster* (Mindscape) and *Pipe Dream* (Lucasfilm). In this system, when a player reaches a certain level of play, he is awarded a password. When used on future plays, the password immediately transports the player to that same level.

In fact, even arcade coin-op makers have begun to realize that games must offer "continue" options if players are to maintain interest over an extended period of time.

question

I'd like to pose a question that is probably in the minds of many gamers who read VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT. Your magazine seems to have reviews and screen shots of games months before they are out in stores. How do you get your hands on these games? Do you get them from the manufacturers or other sources? I was wondering if you could give me the names, addresses and phone numbers of your sources so I could get in touch with them. I am particularly interested in advance copies of Genesis and TurboGrafx-16 games.

—Evan Williams
Wrentham, Massachusetts

answer

If you think about it a minute, Evan, you'll realize that what you're requesting is impossible to deliver. Prerelease copies of video and computer games are sent to magazines and reviewers on the various software publishers' mailing lists because magazines work on what is called "lead time." Lead time is the gap between the time a review, article or news item is written and the time when the issue containing it appears on the newsstand.

Let's say a magazine has a three-month lead time: If a software publisher intends to release a game in October, it will want that game featured in the November issue of the magazine (since magazines always appear about a month in advance of their cover date). In order to make the November issue, a copy of the game has to be sent to the reviewer around August.

So you can now understand how VG&CE writers get advance copies of games. It is equally obvious that that same publisher wants you to see its game in October, when it's released to the public for general consumption.

This is just one of the perks (along with free T-shirts and promotional gewgaws) enjoyed by members of the glamorous and much-coveted profession of game reviewing.

question

As a gamer of the last generation of video games, I was wondering what happened to game companies like Exidy and Universal. I own a ColecoVision and enjoyed games like *Mouse Trap, Lady Bug, Space Panic, Mr. Do* and *Cosmic Avenger.* These are all good games and, to my knowledge, are not available for the SMS or NES. I also would like to know why Sega doesn't make a version of *Subroc, Space Fury* or *Carnival* for the SMS.

—Sam Pryfogle
Troy, Ohio

answer

Ah, you stirred up my memory with your letter, Sam! I remember the games you mention very well—in fact, I would probably classify Universal's *Lady Bug* as my all-time favorite maze-chase contest, surpassing even the *Pac-Man* games.

After thumbing through several recent issues of *RePlay*, the coin-op industry's bible, I can find no references to Universal. Nor have I seen a new coin-op from that company in quite some time, so I presume it's history. Exidy, on the other hand, continues to make "kits"—program boards for new games that slot into preexisting cabinets and can be purchased for about half the price of full units. Two of its newest games are *Twister* and *Yukon Showdown*, but judging by the size and quality of the Exidy ads, I'd say it is no longer a coin-op powerhouse.

As for why companies don't publish older games: They just don't believe they will sell as well as new games. Of course, with the coming of CD-based games, we will start seeing game packages, much like the audio "greatest hits" collections that are advertised on TV. They will contain dozens of "classic" games like the ones you mention. Otherwise, until somebody figures out that a great game is a great game and that products like *Lady Bug* and *Space Panic* (the original inspiration for *Lode Runner*) could be big hits if brought up to current audio-visual standards, we old timers are left raving into the wind about how great games were "in the good old days"!

question

Is the Atari Lynx getting software support or not? One more question. Your October issue stated that the Lynx *retails* for $149.99. If that's true, why are stores selling the Lynx for $179.99-200?

—Alex Le
Santa Ana, California

answer

Stores are selling the Lynx at those prices because so few of them are available and also due to the rising manufacturing cost. Thus, the price difference.

On the same subject, be aware of retailers trying to grab every penny they can extort. A year earlier, certain stores sold $40-50 NES cartridges like *Double Dragon* for as much as $200. (We hear that *Super Mario Bros. 3* falls into that category now.) Remember: the price we print is the "*suggested* retail price." Suggestions are not always followed, however.

So far, support for the Lynx has been tepid, at best. Look for new software soon.

question

I heard that Commodore is coming out with a game machine (based upon the Amiga) with a CD player. Is it true or just another rumor?

—Aaron Peterson
Indio, California

answer

No, Aaron, it is true—or at least it was. Commodore did indeed plan to introduce a new Amiga that would have been bundled with a CD drive, but no keyboard. The machine was to have been an entertainment-oriented system and, to that end, Commodore had reached agreements with numerous publishers to produce games that would use the CD drive.

Then, suddenly, word began to trickle in that those same publishers received letters from Commodore canceling all entertainment products. Now we were told the machine would have an educational inclination. At this point, I think it's fair to say that the entire industry is extremely cynical about this new CD Amiga.

question

I have an Amiga computer now but I was wondering if it would be a waste to buy an NES since there are all these new 16-bit game systems. How much longer do you think the NES is going to be the number-one game system?

—Aaron Molner
St. Louis, Missouri

answer

That's a a tough one, Aaron. The new 16-bit game systems, especially the Genesis, have been very successful, and they have certainly caught the imagination of the video-gaming public. Also, once large numbers of game players are exposed to the superior sounds and graphics of the senior systems, it's possible that even top-notch NES entries may start to look dated.

On the other hand, even the Genesis has not sold anything remotely close to the number of systems the NES has. For that matter, I expect prices on the NES will drop over the next six to eight months, and software prices won't be far behind.

In other words, if what you're looking for is a bunch of new games, this might be the perfect time to buy an NES, especially if you can find a good buy on one. It's still the top system, has a zillion games (many of which can be rented for a buck or two at your local video store) and the sheer number of systems in use guarantees it won't vanish from view; certainly not this year, anyway.

I bet you thought I forgot this month's Prize Packet, didn't you? Oh, ye of little faith! The winner of this month's collection of buttons and other promotional ephemeral is Mike Tribe of Fernie, British Columbia, Canada, who asked a question the Doc has also pondered.

question

I was wondering how all these gamers find out all these secret codes, power-ups and title-screen controller methods, like B-B-A-Up-Down-**SELECT**-**START** on Controller 2, and that sort of thing. Do the game programmers punch in the program [so gamers will find them]? Please help me understand.

—Mike Tribe
Fernie, British Columbia, Canada

answer

This very question caught my attention recently with the arrival of *Video War II*, a fanzine published by Mike Ciletti (684 Kensington Way, Bolingbrook, IL 60439; 25¢ per issue) with several such tips. How, I wondered, does someone "stumble" on the fact that when playing Tengen's NES version of *Tetris*, "When any piece is falling, pause the game and use 'Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, B, A, **START**' to turn any piece into a rectangle."? Obviously, this is not something one discovers by accident. It requires a single-minded devotion and a lot of free time.

Unless there's some secret to all this that we haven't tumbled onto. How about it, Mike Ciletti and all you other video gunslingers; how *do* you work out those incredible tips?

In any case, Mr. Tribe's *Game Doctor* Prize Packet is en route!

Q & A QUICKIES

- **Eddie Picchi of Cambridge, Wisconsin, is a three-system man—TG-16, Sega Genesis and NES—with one video display TV/monitor! Talk about a modern dilemma, eh? I'd look at video mixers if I were you, Eddie. They work similarly to audio mixers in that they allow several devices to be attached to a device with limited inputs.**
- **J. Bramer of Great Lakes, Illinois, wants to know if the Super Famicon is to the NES as the Genesis is to the SMS. Yes, in that both are 16-bit versions of earlier 8-bit game systems. He also yearns to know if the Super Famicon will feature an adapter to play NES games, as the Genesis does. No word on that yet; the Super Famicon's U.S. appearance hasn't even been *announced*.**
- **Glen Chen of Santa Monica, California, wonders if there are any differences between the Japanese and American versions of Game Boy and its software. The hardware differences are purely cosmetic, Glen. The games are, in most cases, Japanese-language versions.**
- **John Barbagallo of Methuen, Massachusetts, inherited a used C-64 but needs a power pack and wire hookups. I'd check the newsstands for a C-64 user magazine, John. It should contain numerous advertisers who have what you need.**
- **Note to M. Crabtree of Frankfort, Indiana: You sent the Doc an empty envelope! I'm good, but not even I can provide an answer without a question.**

By the way, gang, much as I wish I could, it is not possible for me to answer letters personally. Between my practice, writing this column and my mandatory spa time, I'm lucky to have time to *read* all my mail, much less actually answer it!

VECTREX UPDATE: Vectrex users should check out the July issue of VG&CE for information on where to get replacements, software, etc., for the GCE Vectrex. Since then, several more leads have appeared, and I have been dutifully checking them out. Stay tuned!

And one last note: The letters you've been sending have been fantastic. I believe I have the most intelligent readers in all of electronic gaming. Keep 'em flying!

That's about it for this installment of *the Game Doctor*. Remember to send your questions and comments to ***the Game Doctor*, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107.**

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Chills, Dizziness And



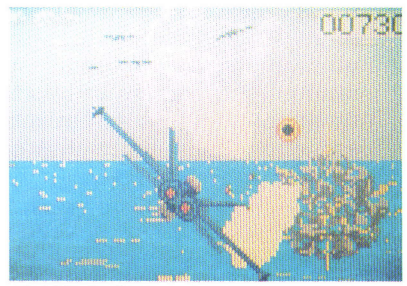
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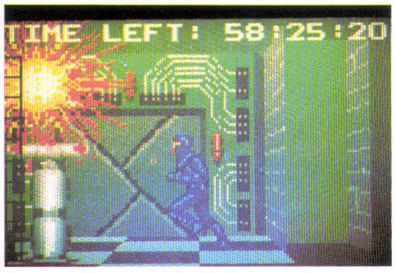
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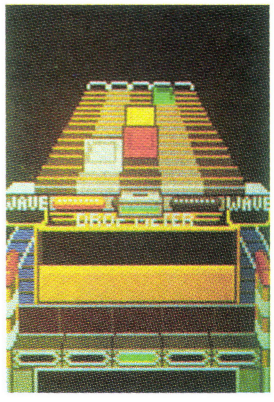


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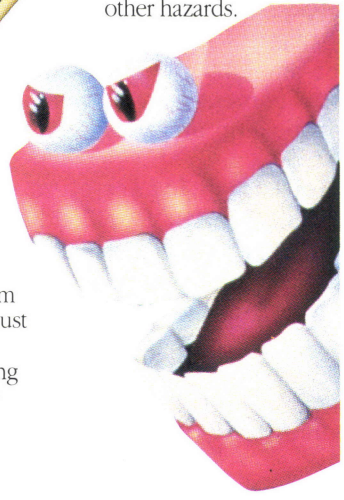


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Conquests of Camelot: The Search for the Grail

SIERRA ON-LINE

Versions: Atari ST ($59.95), IBM PC ($59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

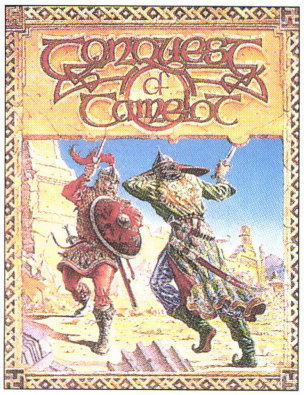
The Arthurian myths of Camelot, Merlin, the sword in the stone, the Lady of the Lake, Galahad, Lancelot, Guinevere and the Holy Grail are among the best-known tales in Western literature. Surprisingly, however, the subject has received relatively little attention from computer-game creators. They've mostly opted to set their RPGs in more remote locales, full of underground treasure troves and wandering orcs.

With *Conquests of Camelot*, however, the writer/artist team of Christy Marx and Peter Ledger made amends, bringing the Arthurian legends to the computer-game medium with a skill, sophistication and intelligence rarely seen in the field.

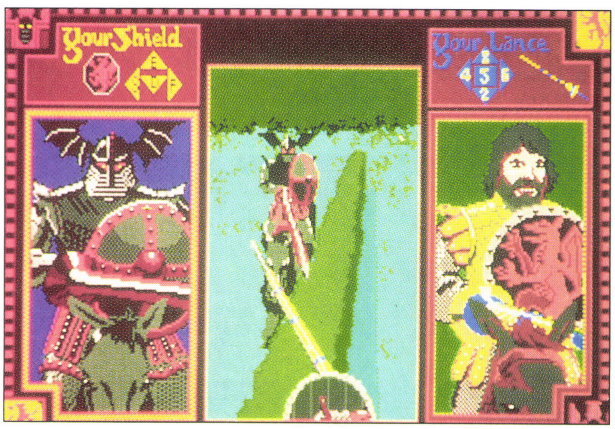
Marx, best known for scripting comic books (*The Sisterhood of Steel*) and animated TV shows (*Jem, G.I. Joe*) clearly revels in her subject. Her extensive research into the origins of the Camelot myths is evident throughout the adventure, but never bogs the game down in pedantic details.

Her intimate familiarity with the various story elements is so sure-footed that she can even revise major plot elements without tarnishing the saga's authenticity. (After all, Arthur did not find the Grail in the Malory story, Galahad did.) Her artist/illustrator husband and partner, Peter Ledger, brings a similar authenticity to the visuals, rendering Camelot and environs with a lusty blend of reality and romanticism.

Rather than simply rehash the elements of the Thomas Malory story, *La Morte d'Arthur*, Marx conversely uses the familiar story points to fashion a new adventure spiritually true to its source material, yet far more suitable as a role-playing adventure.



The focus of the game is Arthur's quest for the Holy Grail. As the adventure begins, Arthur is preparing to leave Camelot on the holy quest. Merlin will not accompany him physically, but will be with him in spirit.



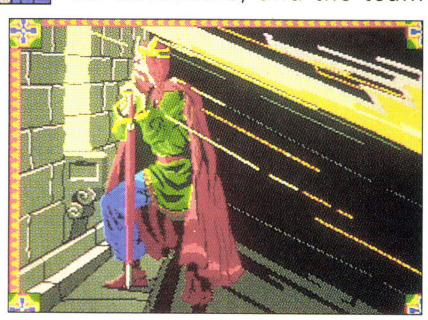
Other knights have gone on this quest before, but none have returned. The fate of Camelot depends not only upon Arthur's ability to find the Grail, but his worthiness to possess it. We are also let in on the existence of one of literature's most famous romantic triangles: Arthur loves his queen (spelled Gwenevere in this game), Gwen loves Lancelot (Arthur's closest friend and most loyal knight) and Lancelot loves Gwen.

Arthur makes his farewells, dons his armor, makes the appropriate religious donations (at the Chapel of the Twin Gods), mounts his steed and sets off for numerous possible locales, some quite far afield from Camelot. In addition to finding the Grail, Arthur must also find and rescue the various knights who ventured off before him.

Conquests of Camelot is a mature, delightful adventure, and the team of Marx and Ledger are born interactive storytellers. The game system, based on the long-running Sierra Quest interface, is



Sierra On-Line brings the Arthurian legend to the computer-game medium with its delightful *Conquests of Camelot: The Search for the Grail.*



more satisfying than even the *King's Quest* adventures themselves. This is a superb work that should hold an appeal even for those gamers who don't ordinarily take to RPGs.

—Bill Kunkel

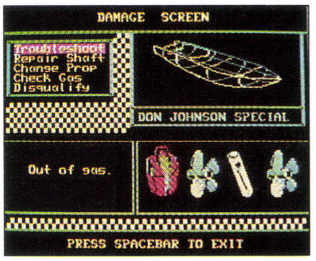
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P. O. Box 485
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(209) 683-4468

Heat Wave

ACCOLADE

Versions: Amiga ($44.95), Atari ST ($49.95), Commodore 64 ($29.95), IBM PC ($39.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10



It was only a matter of time, considering the popularity of auto-racing games, before developers doused themselves in sunscreen and attempted to bring powerboat racing to home computers. Alas, "attempt" is the operative word regarding Artech Digital Entertainment's *Heat Wave*, a sincere but flawed attempt to do an offshore version of DSI's *Test Drive*.



Accolade's *Heat Wave* is an action-packed powerboat battle on the open seas, with you behind the wheel.

Heat Wave is extremely impressive, right up until the moment the game actually begins. The options menu controls a wide variety of features, including world detail and frame speed (the less detail in the graphics, the faster the game plays). Course selection includes six predesigned courses as well as a roll-your-own option with room for ten custom-designed routes.

Four different powerboats are available to the player, two Deep-Vs (monohull boats that run well on choppy seas) and two catamarans (great for calm weather). Both types actually ride on top of the water, rather than plowing through it, which allows them to attain speeds up to 90 mph. When ships absorb damage during a race, users can make a pit stop to replace parts or fill up the gas tank.



Heat Wave's problems are largely visual, and this becomes obvious the minute the race actually begins. In order to get the boat moving fast enough to approximate the experience of riding in a powerboat, it's necessary to reduce the world detail and the boat detail to the lowest settings. Even then, a boat race is not an auto race. The illusion of speed in a game like *Test Drive* can be communicated through the movement of the white lines running down the center of the highway and the speed at which the roadside scenery passes. This is not possible in a game set at sea. *Heat Wave* creates the illusion of speed through the movement of white dots representing tiny breakers on the water's surface. Without accompanying scenery, however, this method is spotty at best, and the scenery is too far away to effectively buttress the illusion.

Worse, most of the screen is taken up with huge gauges, leaving only a small, square window for the visual display. Imagine driving a powerboat with your head braced so it can't turn left or right; now you have a pretty good idea of what *Heat Wave* is like. There isn't a second when the player doesn't yearn to look port or starboard and see where the heck they are!

Speedboat aficionados may be turned on by this simulation, but until someone can produce a more visually compelling and panoramic treatment, powerboat racing is unlikely to become a hot subject for computer gaming.

(Although the IBM PC version has a claim on the box that it supports Ad Lib boards, it does not.)

—B. K.

Accolade
20833 Stevens Creek Blvd.
Cupertino, CA 95014
(408) 985-1700

Richard and Alan's Escape From Hell

ELECTRONIC ARTS

Versions: IBM PC ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	**2**	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10

"The hellish landscape seems vast and unending...but you are driven to rescue your girlfriend by love, guilt and the fact you paid big bucks for this game and you want to get your money's worth. So your adventure begins..."

The above paragraph, with its contrived humor, reveals a smidgen of the creative and philosophical basis for *Richard and Alan's Escape From Hell*. It's a dry, witless and thoroughly dated role-playing adventure, casting its creators, Richard L. Seaborne and Alan J. Murphy, as the lead characters. The result is a gaming experience that seems as pointless and boring as purgatory itself must be.

Richard comes home and finds his partner Alan gone, with only a note left behind. Richard's girlfriend/wife reads the note and disappears. Richard reads the note and wakes up in Dante's Inferno. At this point, the player, cast as Richard, takes over and begins the kind of role-playing adventure that was very popular in the mid-'80s.

EA's *Richard and Alan's Escape From Hell* is a satirical RPG featuring the game's creators as the main characters.



The screen is broken into three sections. The upper-left window is a miniaturized title screen that serves no purpose other than taking up space. A horizontal band running across the bottom of the screen contains typical RP data, including the user's name, hit points and weapon.



The main visual display occupies what's left of the playfield. This square window alternately features close-up drawings of characters the user encounters and a maplike overview of the immediate locale. The graphics here generally consist of icons and small drawings representing key elements of the topography.

The encounters are cut-and-dried affairs. The "talk" command causes any character to deliver a fixed spiel, accompanied by a close-up drawing.

One element which theoretically elevates this game beyond the level of an overripe RPG is its humorous content. Granted, humor is a subjective thing, but it's hard to find belly laughs in the collection of cardboard characters populating this world. Genghis Khan and Joseph Stalin turn up as genial, if halfwitted, sidekicks. Milton and Helless, (if there's a pun there, it eludes me), a pair of underworld attorneys, provide lame legal satire. Melrose Amber hands out sunglasses that cut down on the infernal glare. There are a lot of "hell" jokes, as in: attorneys from hell and RPG from hell (which adequately describes this effort).

If *Escape From Hell* is supposed to be a satire of lame RPGs, it fails miserably. There is no discernable difference between the spoof and the games being satirized.

—B. K.

Electronic Arts
1820 Gateway Drive
San Mateo, CA 94404
(800) 245-4525

Gold of the Americas

STRATEGIC STUDIES GROUP

Versions: Amiga ($39.95), IBM PC ($39.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

SSG, a company best known for historical war games, has recently introduced a strategic endeavor covering the colonization and exploitation of the newfound American continent. The player controls the efforts of one of the four major powers: England, France, Portugal or Spain.

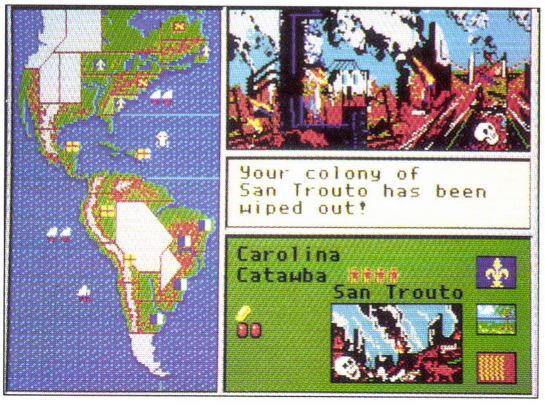
Gold of the Americas starts out with a virgin western hemisphere open for exploration and conquest. It takes skill and planning to wield the forces provided by the home country, and augmented by the player's own treasury, into a majestic colonial empire.

Seven ingredients are combined to help carry out the task at-hand. Colonists are the backbone of the whole game. They establish and maintain colonies and provide steady income and the vital victory points necessary to emerge triumphant. Explorers open new sections of the map for colonization and can launch a raid on an enemy colony. These raids are often financially rewarding. They sometimes even liberate the entire settlement and absorb it as a colony of the player's own country.

Soldiers are indispensable in a colony's formative days, since the existing natives, hostile to alien invaders, revolt until they finally die off from new European diseases. If soldiers are sent along with an explorer, they increase the chance of his mission's success.

Tradeships, assigned to the various sea zones, yield additional income. Privateers and opposing tradeships may prey on them, but warships can provide an extra level of protection. However, they must be repurchased each turn and so are quite costly.

Gold of the Americas, by SSG, follows the colonization of the newfound American continent.



Finally, slavery was common during this era, so chattel are available to the player. True to real life, slaves tend to rebel after a while. This makes them costly in the long run, and their use can easily be avoided.

Colony management is the focus of the game. Each has its own indigenous people, gold and

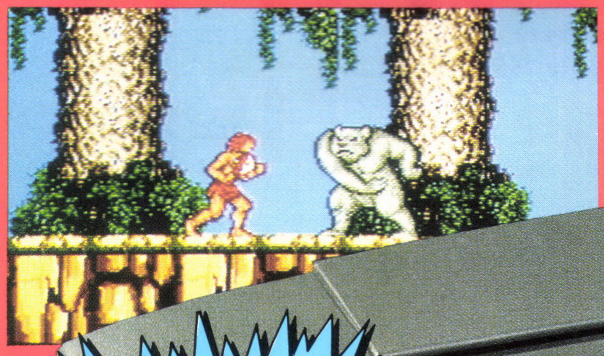
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continued from page 126

minerals, as well as a maximum level of growth. These settings can either echo history or be randomized to make each game new. Colonies can be exploited, enhanced, placated or simply left alone. Exploiting provides funds for the player's own private stash and is generally used on natives or imported slaves. Enhancement increases the colony's development level. Placating a colony may help keep restive colonies from declaring independence. A revolting colony that hoists its own colors can only be retaken through the use of massive force.

Gold of the Americas lets you play the leader of England, France, Portugal or Spain, and conquer America.





The playing screen is divided into three distinct areas. The left half contains a view of the whole western hemisphere. The bottom-right corner usually displays the currently selected area and any forces there. The upper-right corner contains graphic feedback for various game occurrences, and is also used to select which of the various forces you buy each turn.

The game graphics aren't startling, but they are interesting. The sound used in various places is actually pretty good, considering the low capabilities of the PC's internal speaker.

Many game options can be adjusted, and three levels of computer player are available for each of the countries. The game is limited, though. With only about 30 different areas to explore and colonize, it may become repetitive after only a few replays. But the higher-level computer opponents add challenge to later games, making *Gold of the Americas* especially interesting to strategy players.

—R. Bradley Andrews

Strategic Studies Group
Dist. by Electronic Arts
1820 Gateway Drive
San Mateo, CA 94404
(415) 571-7171

Starflight 2: Trade Routes of the Cloud Nebula

ELECTRONIC ARTS

Version: IBM PC ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

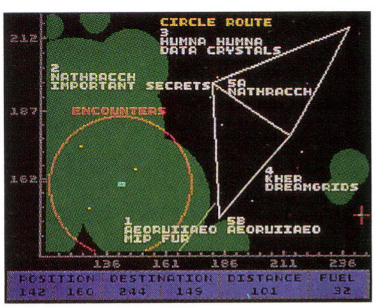
My, how things have changed since veterans of the original *Starflight* journeyed to the Cloud Nebula. Apparently, the Spemin have acquired some formidable weapons and a seemingly unlimited supply of fuel, the sources of which are a mystery.

Even if one has no idea what a Spemin is, the sound of the word conjures queer images. These space-faring slimebags possess the arrogance of a Klingon but pose little more of a threat than a bunch of rabid Smurfs! Fully intending to fulfill their destiny of the meek inheriting the Arth (pun intended), the Spemin issued several proclamations demanding that Arth surrender. Enter the player and his contingent of conscripts, charged by Interstel to investigate the Spemin menace.

Like the original, the strongest aspect of *Starflight 2* is the way the 25 known races of sentient beings interact with one another. Each race, meticulously molded for individuality that far transcends appearance alone, possesses distinct personality types, individual objectives and varied feelings toward the other species depicted.

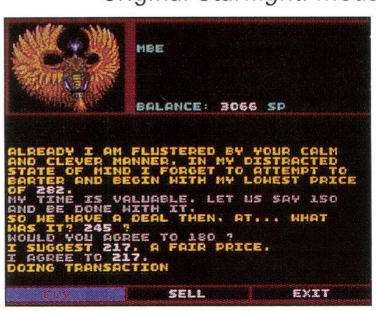
The player can supplement a meager initial allowance to gain necessary capital to progress toward the final objective. The fastest option, initially, is to traverse the trade routes in the immediate vicinity of Starbase. The routes expand as one secures information, and it becomes possible to trade high-value specialty items. Other methods of making money include the capture of rare life-forms, mining for precious minerals and recommending new planets for colonization. Of these, the latter is the most lucrative.

Starflight 2 offers a broad-scoped universe (150 systems with up to eight planets each), an unrestricted plot line and a strong graphic presentation. Each planet is individualized by its inhabitants, trading goods, mineral structure, political stance, flora and fauna. The exploration potential alone is immense. Upon arrival in a new system, planetary scans treat the gamer to beautiful multicolor displays of the rotating globes. Planetary-landing descents occur over a topographical display of which no two are the same.



A broad-scoped universe, an unrestricted plot line and a strong graphic presentation is what you'll find in EA's *Starflight 2: Trade Routes of the Cloud Nebula*.

On the negative side, there is little improvement of the interface from the original *Starflight*. Mouse support would have benefited the menu-driven structure; instead it takes numerous keystrokes to accomplish what should be "point-and-click" functions.



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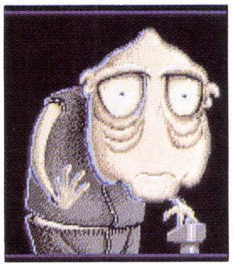
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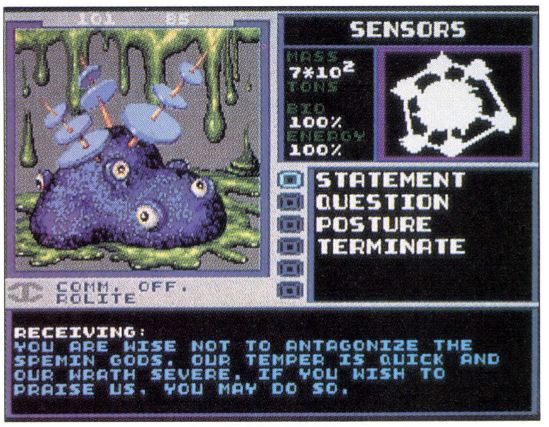
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The fastest option to gathering the funds needed to halt the Spemin menace in *Starflight 2: Trade Routes of the Cloud Nebula* is to traverse the trade routes near the Starbase.

The archaic game-save system is frustrating. The game ends if one's entire crew dies, and the only way to restore a game-in-progress without starting over completely is to first make a copy of the save position on another disk.

Starflight 2 expands the horizons of the known universe and allows players a peek at a funny, highly captivating alternate reality. The environment created is far from the world we know, but completely plausible thanks to the richness of detail with which it is portrayed.

—Ed Dille

Electronic Arts
1820 Gateway Drive
San Mateo, CA 94404
(800) 245-4525

Bandit Kings of Ancient China

KOEI

Versions: Amiga ($59.95), IBM PC ($59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

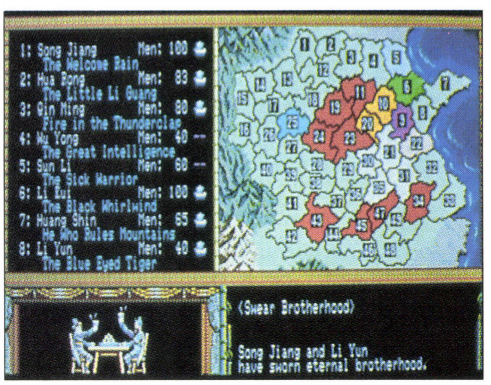
Koei's latest sweeping saga of the Oriental world, *Bandit Kings of Ancient China*, continues a highly successful series. *Nobunaga's Ambition*, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and *Genghis Khan* each allow players to become central characters in vital periods of historical conflict, and each features a continually improving player interface. *Bandit Kings* is, without a doubt, Koei's finest product to date.

Based upon a 12th-century historical novel about the Song dynasty, the game revolves around 108 legendary "spirits" known as the bandit kings of Lian Shan Bo Mountain. Four scenarios are variations on the same final objective: Recruit individuals to the cause in order to challenge the corrupt government official Gao Qui.

Each turn covers one month of game time and the player must complete his objectives by A.D. 1127, the historical year of the barbarian invasions. While in exile, a player/ character has six possible commands to choose from per turn. Once settled in a prefecture, 35 possible commands are possible every turn. In addition, a comprehensive intelligence-gathering menu (the view option) appears each turn. The diversity inherent in the command structure is such that each game takes on a different flavor.

The gamer must perform a variety of duties to succeed, including finding a home prefecture and recruiting bandits to become sworn brothers or sisters. Troops must be organized and armed, then empty prefectures have to be occupied until all sworn brothers control their own. All citizens must be fed and receive services until the popularity meter reaches 250. Finally, the gamer must kill Gao Qui.

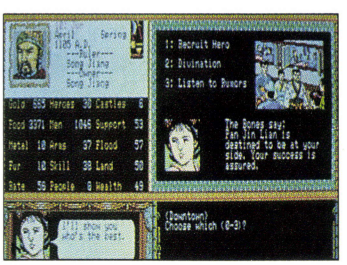
The majority of the action stems from the strategic map screen, comprised of four windows. The upper-right quadrant holds a map of the entire country divided into prefectures, each numbered and shaded with the color of the controlling character. Beneath this is a smaller block for the input of commands. The upper-left section contains portraits of the current character and displays the view command. Immediately below this, still lifes and animated displays appear in response to various events that take place within the game.





***Bandit Kings of Ancient China*, Koei's finest product to date, details 12th-century China and a band of mythological spirits known as the bandit kings of Lian Shan Bo Mountain.**

The tactical combat screen is essentially a conventional hexagonal battlefield with artistically rendered mountains, forests, castles and unit icons. Animated sequences depict victory and defeat. One of the latter defeat sequences (there are several ways to lose)



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is a quite realistic beheading of the player/character.

I hope that this series continues to develop and improve, and two immediate refinements come to mind. The menu interface could benefit from mouse support, and the atmosphere of the game would be greatly enhanced by a musical score.

The documentation provided with the game is outstanding in all respects. It includes synopses of the major characters, detailed historical notes on the period, even a chronological breakdown of the novel that inspired the game.

Bandit Kings of Ancient China is a complicated but highly rewarding entrance into another era.

—E. D.

Bandit Kings is a complicated but highly rewarding entrance into another era.



Koei Corporation
1350 Bayshore Highway
Burlingame, CA 94010
(415) 348-0200

The Colonel's Bequest

SIERRA

Versions: Amiga ($59.95), Atari ST ($59.95), IBM PC ($59.95), Macintosh ($59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Sierra On-Line's newest title *The Colonel's Bequest* brings Roberta Williams' successful *King's Quest* format into the mystery genre. The computerist plays the part of Laura Bow in an eight-act play set in the Roaring '20s.

During a weekend spent with a friend on an island estate in the middle of a gator-infested bayou, Colonel Henri Dijon, host of the family reunion, announces his fortune will be divided evenly between his surviving heirs. The evening degenerates into bickering, betrayal, madness and murder. Laura, the daughter of a New Orleans detective, sets out to unravel the secrets of the Dijon family and unmask the killer without becoming the next victim.

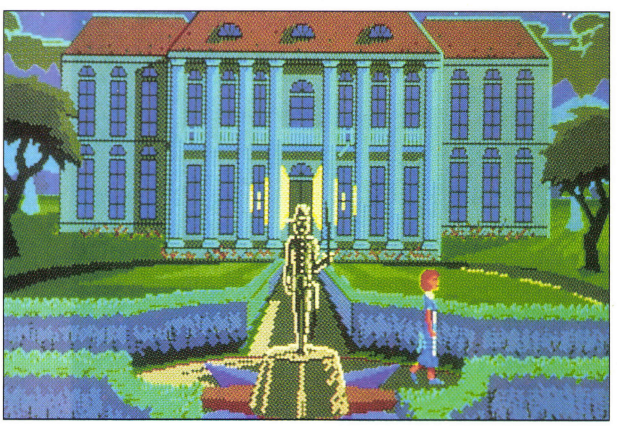
As a real-time adventure, some conversations take place in or out of the player's presence. Four major events occur in each act, and the play will not advance until the player catches at least a glimpse of each. The cast includes a dozen well-drawn characters, all with their own motives.

Most frequent commands are executed with a single keystroke. The game can be played with keyboard or joystick, but a mouse is preferable because it allows the player to click on suspicious objects to identify them.

The Colonel's Bequest supports Hercules, CGA (black and white only) and MGCA; but the full show requires EGA or VGA graphics. A wide variety of sound boards are supported, lending effects ranging from rats to ragtime. Because the game comes on ten 5.25" disks, a hard drive is recommended. Copy protection requires matching a fingerprint with one found on the enclosed map. The game can be played within seconds of installation, and no puzzles must be solved to finish the game.

The Colonel's Bequest has a better parser than most adventures, but annoying bugs still occur. At one point, saying "get lamp" or "get lantern" has very different results.

Sierra's *The Colonel's Bequest* sets the player into the role of actress Laura Bow, a detective's daughter who must unravel the series of murders surrounding the Dijon family.





The player may end up feeling isolated from the characters, despite the thickening plot. Laura is not in the will, so she is in little danger. The other characters, her friend included, seem distant and aloof. And even if all secrets are uncovered, the player can't prevent the gruesome outcome. Another quirk of the game: Despite all the clues, only eavesdropping uncovers the whole store.

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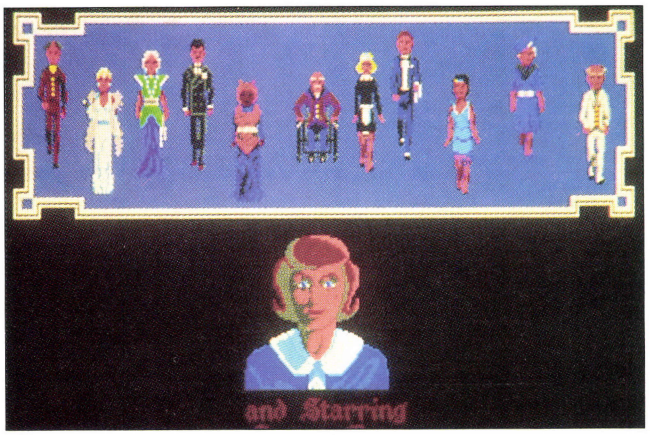
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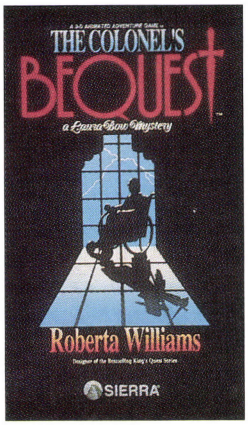
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score is not shown. At the end of the game players learn how they rated on the "sleuth meter." Plenty of false leads are planted, some evidence is easily overlooked and some characters react differently to the player depending on how they are initially approached. It's possible to blunder through the game just to see "whodunit," but this would be like reading the last chapter of a mystery first.



Laura's notebook can be opened at the end, revealing which questions have yet to be answered. Other online hints encourage repeated attempts and keep *The Colonel's Bequest* interesting for repeat plays.



The story within *The Colonel's Bequest* revolves around an eight-act play that Laura is taking part in, though most of the action takes place backstage.

—Alan Roberts

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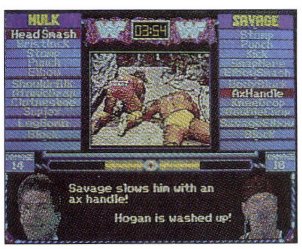
MicroLeague Wrestling II

MICROLEAGUE SPORTS ASSOCIATION

Versions: Amiga ($39.95), IBM PC ($39.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

In 1987 MicroLeague Sports Association introduced their wrestling simulation, licensed from the popular World Wrestling Federation, for the Atari ST and Commodore 64/128. Unlike most computerized wrestling simulations, *MicroLeague Wrestling* utilized images digitized from actual WWF matches. Now Micro League has released *MicroLeague Wrestling II*, with all-new color graphics for the IBM PC and Amiga computers.



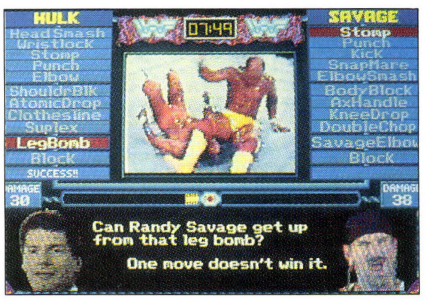
MicroLeague Wrestling II is the highly anticipated sequel, featuring digizited shots of your favorite WWF superstars.

All versions of *MicroLeague Wrestling* have Hulk Hogan versus Randy "Macho Man" Savage as the main event on the boot disk. After the program loads, the player can switch to another match from a series of match disks. A time limit is set, with the one-hour "grudge match" left for the most bitter feud.

Once the match is determined, interviews are conducted with each wrestler. Hulk Hogan encourages the support of his Hulkamaniacs, while the Macho Man gets his from "Macho Madness, yeah!" World Wrestling Federation ring announcer Howard Finkel then introduces the two combatants. With background theme music blaring, the wrestlers walk the aisle to the ring.

The control system is another place where *MicroLeague Wrestling* differs from standard wrestling simulations. Most wrestling games use various combinations of joystick and button position to select which move the wrestler will attempt. *MicroLeague* uses a menu from which three different levels of moves are available: basic (used to weaken an opponent for the higher-powered moves), major and super (the wrestler attempts to pin his opponent).

Wrestlers may also attempt to block their opponent's moves. Once the selection is





entered, the computer ascertains which move was successful and displays its execution in the window in the center of the screen.

At the bottom of the screen is a window where WWF commentators like Jesse "the Body" Ventura provide color commentary and a blow-by-blow description of the action. The wrestler on the losing end gets his damage points increased based on the strength of the move. Once this value passes a threshold level (based on the length of the match), the wrestler can be pinned. The meter in the middle of the screen then

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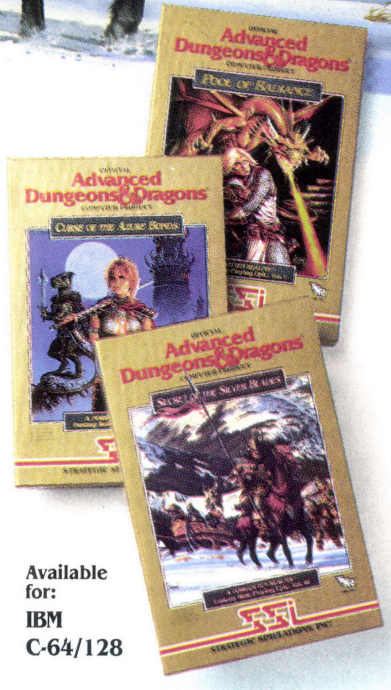
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reflects which wrestler has been the most successful so far.

The original graphics for *MicroLeague Wrestling* looked fine on the C-64, but the new color graphics for *MicroLeague Wrestling II* are spectacular. You can almost see the sweat dripping down foreheads. The interviews are just as entertaining as the real WWF, with the men bragging how they'll emerge victorious wearing the belt. The commentary is just like a WWF television show, with Jesse "the Body" getting on Vince McMahon for playing favorites, while "the Body calls it like it is!"

There are a few areas where *MicroLeague Wrestling* falls short. The sound and music is pretty poor, considering the high quality of the digitized pictures. Also, the menu system works against itself in a two-player game, since each player wants the other to select a move first, so as to gain the advantage of knowing what's coming.

Overall, *MicroLeague Wrestling II* is a highly entertaining simulation of the WWF experience. The brief history of the WWF included in the documentation, along with a list of previous champions, is a nice plus. While it's not the same as actually being there, it's the next best thing.

—Michael Holda

MicroLeague Sports Association
2201 Drummond Plaza
Newark, DE 19711
(302) 368-9990

NY Warriors

VIRGIN MASTERTRONIC

Versions: Amiga ($49.95), Atari ST ($49.95), IBM PC ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

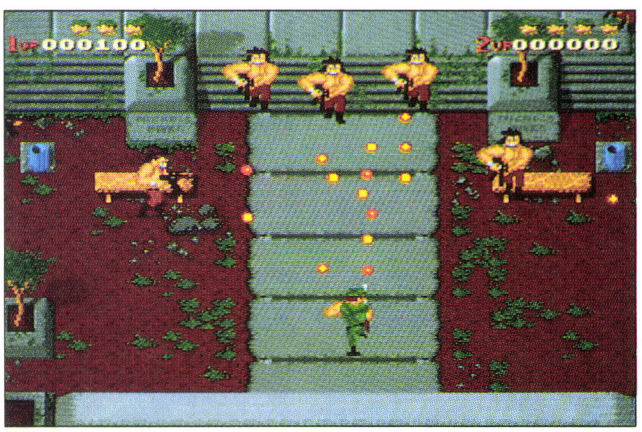
It's one street fighter against a world of trouble in this fast-and-furious shoot-'em-up based on the Arcadia Systems coin-op. Actually, "based on" doesn't adequately describe the makeup of this extraordinarily faithful home rendition. The Amiga edition we tested reproduces the quarter-snatcher in all its glory, including eight levels of play and clue-filled intermissions.

The joystick controls the heavily armed Warrior as he battles his way down the dangerous thoroughfares of the Big Apple to reach the World Trade Center. (Keyboard order entry is possible in the IBM PC edition.) The streamlined interface allows the hero to move in any direction, pick up the more powerful weapons he finds in his travels and fire rapidly in every direction.

Shooting is definitely what this nonstop combat contest delivers in abundance. Bloodthirsty gangs like the Ramboids, Killer Klowns and Sluggers have no intention of letting the Warrior trespass on their turf, so attacks come simultaneously from all directions almost every step of the way. As if the gangs weren't bad enough, there are inanimate dangers such as the Train of Death to avoid.

The lone fighter starts with a rifle, but he can increase firepower by picking up weapons as they come into view on the scrolling playfield. The available weapons include cluster grenades, heat-seeking missiles and flame throwers. Some weapons even fire three-shot bursts, a lethal tactic against large frontal assaults.

Unlike some other game setups, the Warrior doesn't lose an old weapon every time he picks up a new one. One surplus weapon is retained in inventory. If the active one runs out of ammunition, the reserve weapon automatically reactivates.



Virgin Mastertronic has done a first-class job in creating a down-and-dirty blast-athon in the streets of the Big Apple with its *NY Warrior*.

The sound and graphics of this Synergistic design give the Amiga (the version reviewed) a satisfyingly hard workout. The drawings of the hero and villains are incredible, bursting with life. The background is similarly colorful, and the thunderous explosions give the gamer the feeling that he or she has entered a world gone mad.

NY Warriors isn't that different from many other titles in the action-combat genre, but everything about it is absolutely first class. Few home computer games can even faintly approach its thunderous near anarchy. *NY Warriors* is a guaranteed cure for that itchy trigger finger.

—Arnie Katz

Virgin Mastertronic
18001 Cowan, Suites A & B
Irvine, CA 92714
(714) 833-8710

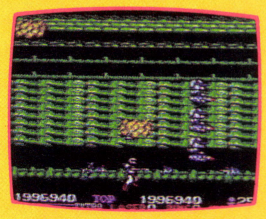
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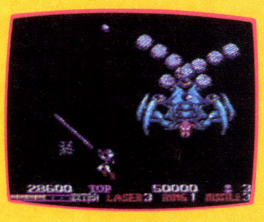
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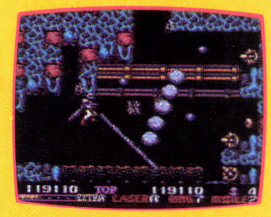




A formation of deadly robo-mutants approaches.



Giganticrab makes Level 1 a formidable challenge.



Burai Fighter attempts to navigate Level 2.



The terrifying Slimedragon, master of the Burai.

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Pro Tennis Tour

UBI SOFT

Versions: Amiga ($39.95), Atari ST ($39.95), IBM PC ($39.95), Commodore-64 ($29.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Sports are a staple subject for computer games. One of the first major athletic events to be simulated was tennis. *Pong*, the first video game, was an elementary representation of the subject. But things have come a long way since then, and UBI Soft advanced the frontier even farther with their recent release of *Pro Tennis Tour*.

The gamer is cast in the role of a professional tennis player, ranked 64th in the world. To reach the top seed, the player will have to compete in many tournament matches throughout the world.

Pro Tennis Tour begins in the practice area. Here the player trains in the various actions that comprise a good tennis game. This is divided into two basic tasks, serving and returning balls. While the bulk of practice should be on the ball return, a strong serve is necessary to get a game off to a good start. A computer server with six distinct firing patterns is available to help the player hone return skills.

But successful play is not just getting the ball back over the net. It requires the player to learn accurate place shots so the opponent will experience difficulty in returning them.

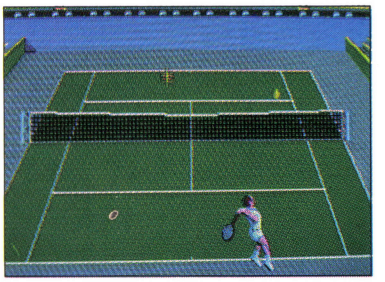
Players put all their practice to the test in the tournament mode, where they face off with other pros in a tennis circuit consisting of the Australian Open, the French Open at Roland Garros, the All England Championship (Wimbledon) and the U.S. Open.

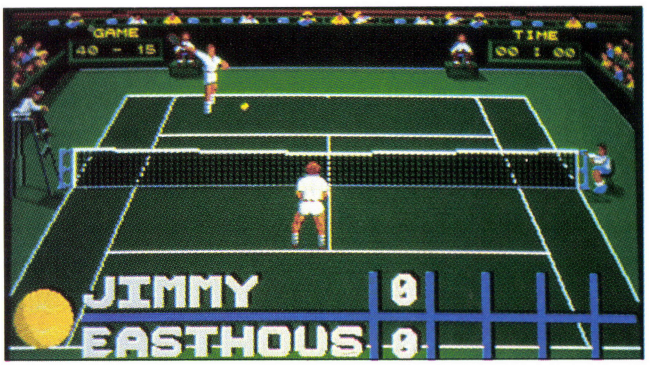
Three difficulty levels are available. The easy level, true to its name, features simple serves, light returns and a positioning cursor for player reference. In the advanced and professional levels, the cursor is gone, and play is incrementally faster.

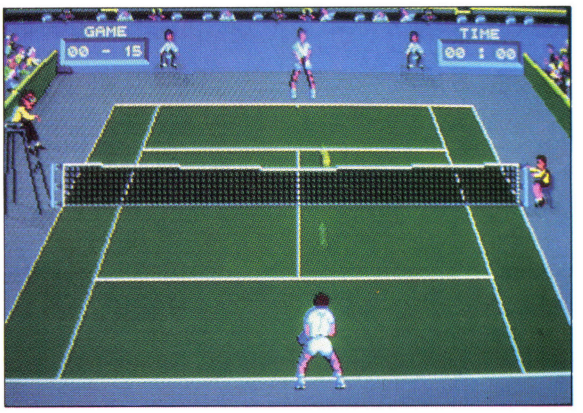
Game graphics feature a three-dimensional perspective from just behind the human player. The courts are colored in conjunction with the current playing surface. As players lob the ball across the court, a good feeling of depth is maintained.

The best aspect of the game is the ability for two players to compete directly. One of the competitors plays from the back court, which takes a bit of adjustment, but the players take turns doing this, and it's not too great a hindrance.

The joystick is the primary control device for the game. Control is fairly straightforward, yet it's very difficult to master the playing techniques. The manual *does* include a decent description of the proper play methods, but it's hard to transfer this information to actual play.







***Pong* has sure come a long way. UBI Soft's *Pro Tennis Tour* is a sharp simulation that takes the player from basic practice to major competition in such events as Wimbledon and the U.S. Open.**

The computer server used in the practice mode is relatively slow and easy to match. But for some reason the first player in tournament mode is much faster. Even in easy mode, shots are returned so fast that it's difficult to volley one shot, let alone several. A computer player that leisurely returned the shot would have helped to round out the training.

The game is sharp and merits consideration. Unfortunately, the difficulty of starting play will likely scare off all but the most dedicated tennis bums. But those who can overcome the steep learning curve are in for quite a treat.

—R. B. A.

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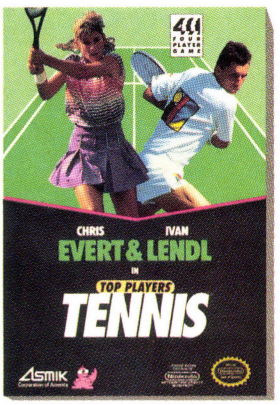
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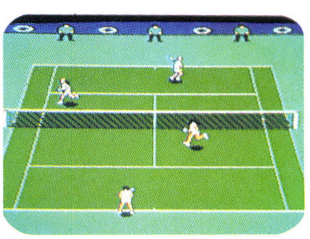


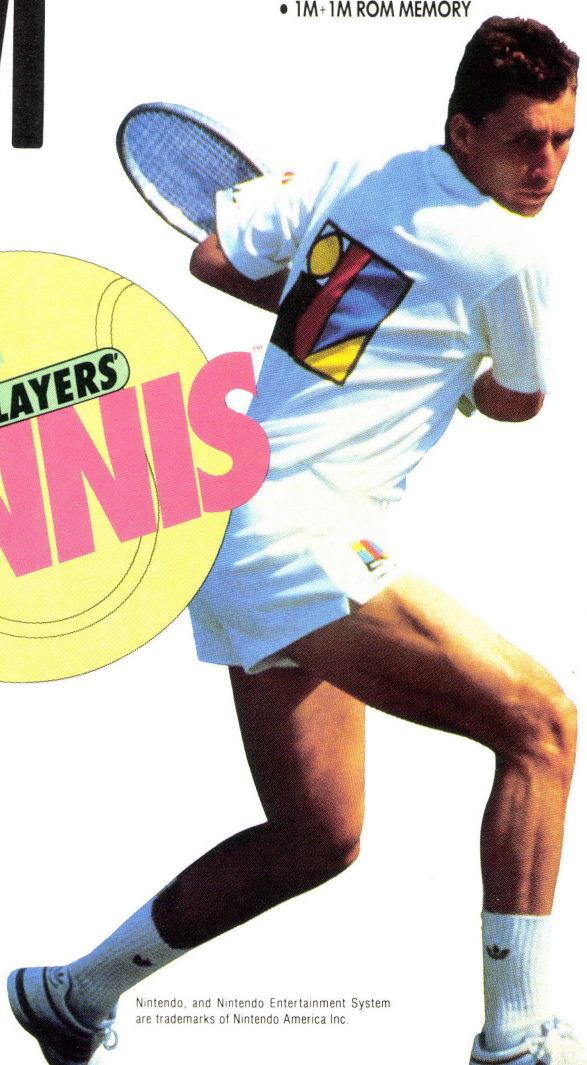
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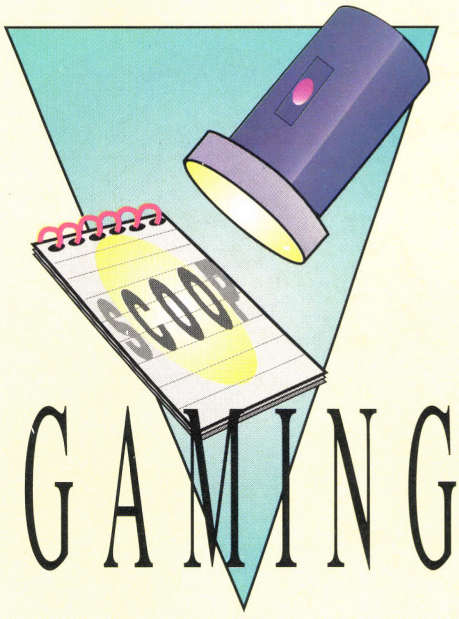
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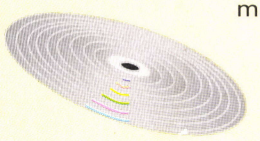
CD: REVOLUTION OR HYPE?

BY ARNIE KATZ

Writer, editor, lecturer and game designer Arnie Katz knows the field from every perspective. Each month his column takes readers inside the world of video and computer games. This month interactive CD is the subject on his mind.

Electronic gaming has had more revolutions than any banana republic. Computing's relentless pace of innovation has never slackened since they built the vacuum-tubed Whirlwind computer. If anything, it has accelerated dramatically in the 25 years since a bunch of M.I.T. brains decided to write *Space War* instead of another revision of the operating system for the school's mighty 4K machine.

We had the *Pong* revolution in 1970, the video-game revolution in '78, the home-computer revolution in '80, the second video-game revolution in '86, the 16-bit revolution in '88 and probably a few others that have momentarily escaped my memory. Apart from providing columnists with an inexhaustible source of material, these periodic revolutions have remade the gaming hobby, sometimes virtually overnight!



And here comes good 'ol Mr. Computer Entertainment with news of another major development: interactive compact-disk games. The technology has drawn "oohs" and "ahs" for several years, but now CD-ROM (a disk drive that reads a compact disk instead of a regular magnetic disk) is finally transposing from dream to reality.

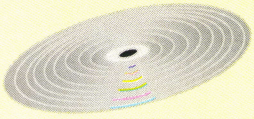
NEC has a CD drive for its TurboGrafx-16, Commodore is reading a CD version of the Amiga and Fujitsu has the FM-Towns computer with a CD drive in Japan. Other major hardware manufacturers, including IBM, plan to participate in interactive CD software in a big way.

Advocates of CD-ROM include some of electronic gaming's foremost visionaries like Bob Jacob (Cinemaware); Bruce Carver (Access Software); Barry Friedman (International Computer Group); and Ken Williams (Sierra On-Line). Although few publishers expect to see a significant return on investment from CD software until 1992, it hasn't kept them from spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on CD-ROM research and development.

Today there are nearly as many major CD-game projects under way as computer-game projects for all computer systems except the IBM PC and Amiga. The annual CD-ROM Conference on the West Coast has rapidly become a mandatory way station for industry executives, and no trade show would be complete without eye-popping demonstrations of CD products, such as the electronic *Guiness Book of World Records*.

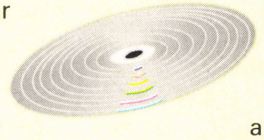
In short, electronic gaming has anointed CD-ROM as "the next big thing." The technology's strengths are certainly impressive, and they provide a legitimate basis for optimism about the impact of CD-ROM on home interactive electronic entertainment. Some of the virtues attributed to CD-ROM include:

• Increased memory—As a previous *Inside Gaming* explained, the quest for more memory is one of the central themes of the history of electronic gaming. No game designer is ever satisfied with the amount of memory available for his or her latest project. It always seems like crowding on the disk forces the programmers to leave out a couple of things that keep the finished game from realizing its potential.



A CD's storage capacity is so vast that it's hard to imagine a game that couldn't comfortably fit on a single disk. Britannica Software intends to release an electronic version of its *Compton's Encyclopedia* on a *single* CD disk! Even the next extravaganza from Lord British (*Ultima* series) is unlikely to be any bigger than that, so CD is an antidote for those disk-switching blues that annoy many players of adventure and strategy contests.

• Graphics—"Sell the sizzle not the steak," chirp advertising professionals. Play-action is the meat of any game, but it's fantastic visuals that widen a gamers' eyes and make them reach for their wallets.



Theoretically, CD systems have the capability of generating visuals that are comparable to fully animated television-quality images. *David Wolf* (Dynamix), *MicroLeague WWF Wrestling* (MLSA) and *Mean Streets* (Access) are three computer games that make limited use of digitized video. Imagine the impact of an entire game that employs even better graphics throughout!

• Audio—CD-ROM brings state-of-the-art stereo sound to the home-gaming screen. In fact, super sound is about the easiest thing to accomplish in CD, explain the field's leading techies. Instead of a few musical phrases and a handful of "close enough" sound effects, CD games are fully scored, like a feature film. The medium can also take advantage of the ability to incorporate real acoustics, not just approximations, into the games.

Let the Controversy Begin

If that were the whole story, CD-based games wouldn't be so controversial. Not everyone is sold on CD, and some, such as leading game designer Chris Crawford, view the impending onslaught of CD hardware and software with considerably more skepticism. Some of the objections raised concerning CD systems include:

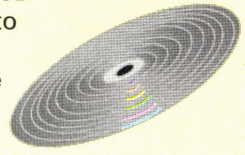
• Consumer Acceptance—CD-ROM may turn out to be the next great thing to hit gaming since Pac-Man gobbled his first ghost, but its success is extremely speculative at this point. In the whole world, only 300,000 interactive CD drives are actually attached to game-playing systems. More than half are in Japan, and there are currently few Americans with the equipment.

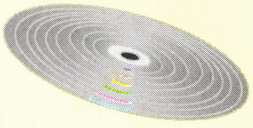
Most people think interactive CD systems will be a hit, but there are no guarantees. The relatively high price of equipment may dissuade many from taking the plunge, and it will be more like a small party than a revolution until hundreds of thousands of these devices are in place.

• Hardware Handicaps—Full-motion, live-action video is the goal in CD software, but none of the currently available systems attain it. Commercially available CD drives effectively present animated sequences, but human figures look unnatural and move herky-jerky.



More sophisticated CD systems are expected to remedy this flaw, but we're talking about the indeterminate future again. CD games will have to score points with the general public based on what they can do now, today, not what their inventors hope they will be able to do years beyond tomorrow.





• Initial elation by designers and developers over gaining access to such a big canvas is tempered by reality. Though the CD's capabilities inspire high expectations, it takes a lot longer to paint a mural of this scope. Only software capitalizing on CD strengths will impress consumers already jaded by conventional computer and video games.

More ambitious games, featuring extensive audio-visual effects and large data banks, take longer to design and implement. That means higher costs—and a much longer wait for that all-important return on investment.

Development cycle length is already controversial. Outfits like Cinemaware routinely take two years to get a game from brainstorming session to store shelf, while other companies put a design through the process in six months. Few CD games can be finished in less than two years, about double the average for a good-quality computer title. Some may require a lot more time, not to mention much more background research than the average computer program.

Game-development budgets vary, but a CD product can put a strain on any treasury. An outlay of $400,000 for a CD game is standard. At those prices, a few early failures could permanently wipe the smiles off the faces of present-day CD advocates.

So, you may wonder, is there a CD-gaming revolution just over the horizon, or is this the '90s version of quadraphonic stereo and dual-screen TV? With compelling arguments to support both sides, it is clear that the issue is in doubt and will remain so until CD gaming either wins mass-market approval or ends up as landfill outside Albuquerque.

As with any form of interactive electronic entertainment, the software will determine the ultimate fate of this new medium. In the next installment of *Inside Gaming*, I'll take a look at what kind of CD games are heading to market.

Focus on Fandom

Electronic-gaming fandom continues to show encouraging signs of life. New fanzines are appearing at a healthy rate, and Mike Cilett's *Video Wars*, reviewed in this column last month, has already wrapped up its sixth issue.

Don't let these pioneering fanzine editors have *all* the fun! Doing a small publication of your own is easy and fun—and it'll give you a chance to meet a lot of enthusiastic gamers and share your opinions with them.

Fanzines for review, and requests to be added to our list of people who want to receive sample copies of video- and computer-gaming fanzines, should be sent to Arnie Katz, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107. I'll also answer individual questions if an SASE is enclosed.

This month's big news is that Joyce Worley, Bill Kunkel and I are producing our own newsletter, *Megagaming*, designed to appeal to hard-core fans and those interested in getting into the hobby. A sample copy is $1 to the address listed above.

COMPUTER STRATEGIES

Better Biking With Super Hang-on

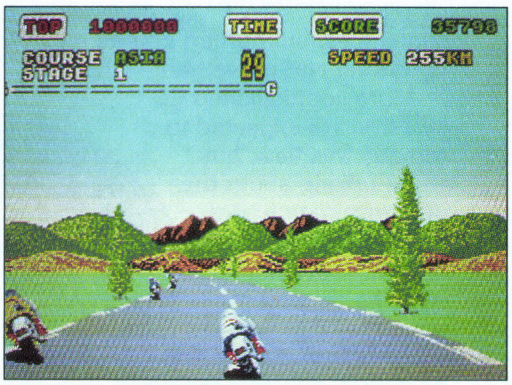
DATA EAST
Versions: Atari ST, Commodore 64, IBM PC, Macintosh

In this sequel to the ever-popular *Hang-on,* players must carefully navigate their bike through four increasingly difficult courses spanning four continents. Game play is similar to the original as far as acceleration and steering. However, the new 1100cc superbike is armed with a nitro switch that sends this little baby up at over 280 kilometers per hour. At that speed, there's little room for error.

Super Hang-on's basic driving strategy remains the same as the original's. Players can move the bike in one of five positions: straight, bank left, bank right, hard left and hard right. Start off on the beginner course by practicing these different positions, in order to learn when to turn and when to turn hard.

Once players navigate a few turns, it becomes obvious that the normal bank is perfect for all moderate or long turns. Using a hard bank results in oversteering and a possible wipeout. The time for the hard bank is on hairpin turns, usually signaled by a number of turn arrows in close proximity to each other. The only way for players to know exactly where these turns are is to map each course or memorize as much as possible. Mapping is recommended, due to the fact that accidentally heading into a hairpin turn at 280 kilometers per hour is almost always fatal.

The secret to success in this game is using the nitro button properly while racing. There are three strategies players can apply to successfully complete the course. The first is to avoid hitting the nitro button at all. Believe it or not, it is possible to finish each race without ever touching the nitro button. This is a good strategy to use early on, so players can map out a course at a slower speed. However, this method won't rack up points, since players can't pass a single bike traveling at this speed. In fact, when navigating at low speed, watch for tailgating bikes that might ram the player from behind!





The superbike you drive in Data East's *Super Hang-On* cruises at speeds of over 280 kilometers per hour, leaving little room for error. So, use your nitro button carefully.

The second success strategy is to tap the nitro on and off and creep up on bikes one at a time. This makes it easier to slow down for sharp turns, since you are never really at top speed for more than a second or two. Again, scores will not be too high. The number of bikes passed will stay fairly low.

Obviously, the best way to earn big points is to use the third strategy. Drive like a maniac with your finger jammed to the nitro button as long as possible. This strategy should only be used when players feel completely comfortable with a course; even a split-second delay at this speed is deadly.

The hairpin turns are *impossible* to complete at 288 km/h, so keep one cautionary detail in mind. Release the nitro button or hit the brakes when you see sign of a sharp turn. Failure to heed this warning will result in both a wrecked bike and a bruised ego.

—Frank Tetro, Jr.

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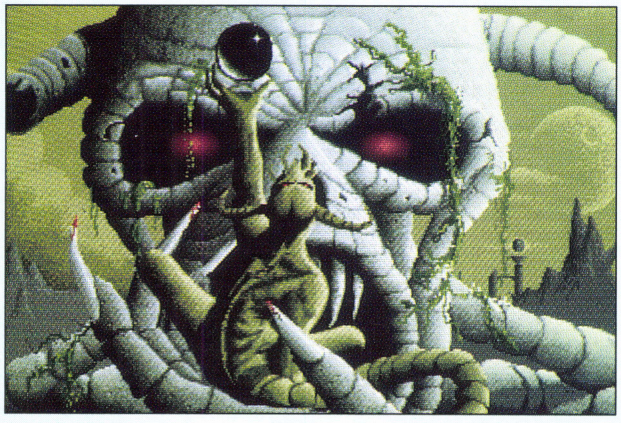
Having a Ball With Ballistix

PSYGNOSIS LTD.
Versions: Amiga, Atari ST, Commodore 64, IBM PC



Ballistix is a one- or two-player action game that resembles a futuristic type of air hockey. Players must move their cursor around the board firing at the puck in an attempt to launch it through the opponent's goal.

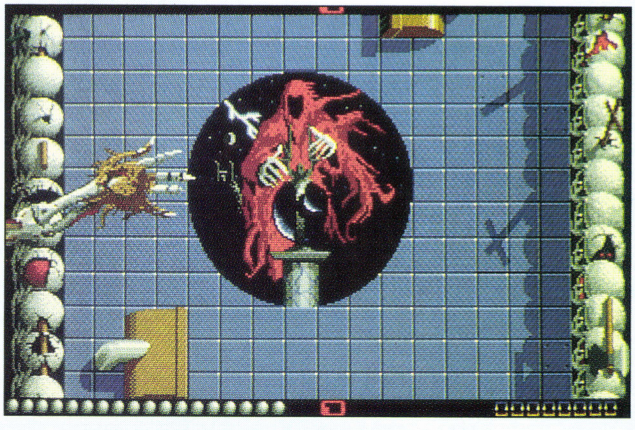
Gamers have only a limited supply of balls, so they must take careful aim when launching them at the puck. Once the balls are used, the player must wait until an opponent fires some shots before he or she can resume play.



Don't let the stunning graphics in Psygnosis' *Ballistix* cloud your vision. If you do, you'll most certainly lose track of your goal—in more ways than one!

The basic strategy behind *Ballistix* is simple: A careful aim and knowledge of the game field equals victory. Start off by playing the one-player game where the field is tilted toward your goal. Practice developing a skill positioning the cursor straight at the ball to launch the puck straight ahead.

Remember that if the puck is hit from even the slightest angle, it could ricochet unpredictably. The most effective way to maintain some sort of control is to aim for just left or right of the puck's center to launch it at a 45-degree angle in that direction. These shots can be important when trying to bounce the ball off the wall and into the opponent's goal.



Once players feel comfortable with maneuvering the puck, it's time to start taking advantage of the various objects on different levels. The first few to be found, such as the bumpers and ricochet arms, are there for obvious reasons. Learn to use these obstacles to quickly ricochet the ball into enemy territory .

Red arrows represent pitch changes on the board. The ball will always roll in the direction of the arrows. It's best to think of these as hills on the field. These can destroy a player's attack if they are encountered on the way toward an opponent's goal. It's important to note their position and learn to avoid them when on offense. If, however, the opponent is attacking, a good move is to launch a ball sideways at the puck, knocking it down one of these "hills." This way you can thwart the opposition.

Players may run into other obstacles, like gravity pits for example—purple hills with arrows pointing in all directions. Balls or pucks that enter this zone fly out in random directions. Pitch-change zones are squares marked with a diagonal line and a colored ball. The ball's color determines which way the board will tilt if the puck enters this area. If the ball is your opponent's color, aim for this zone to tilt the board toward their goal.

Be wary of a black ball with yellow arrows pointing outward in all directions. This object explodes when hit, sending balls every which way. This can be dangerous when you're on the offensive, so be careful.

There are other objects that appear in the upper levels, but I won't list them; it's more fun to discover some of them for yourself. Just remember: Aim for any letters that may appear. Spelling out the word "RICOCHET" with these letters adds to a player's score bonus.

—F. T., Jr.

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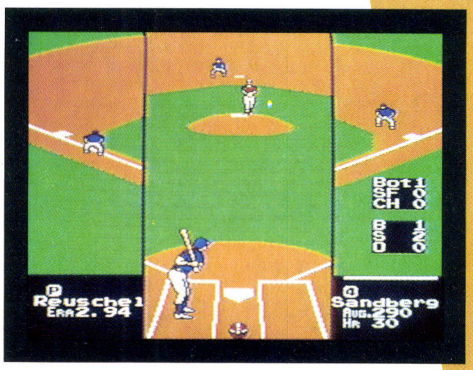
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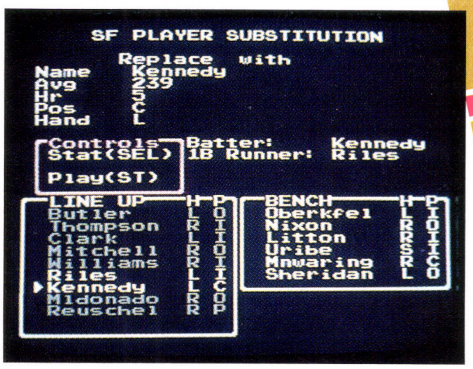
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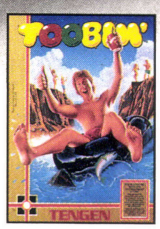
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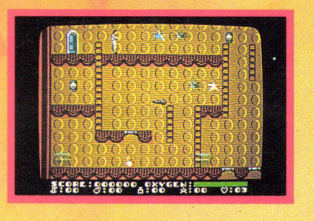
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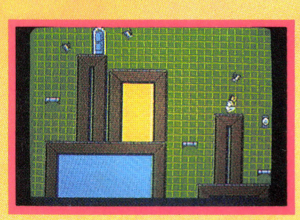
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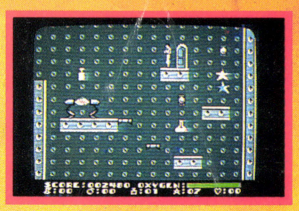
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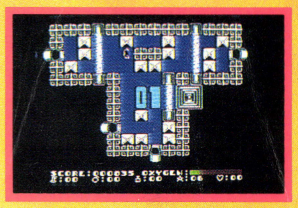




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